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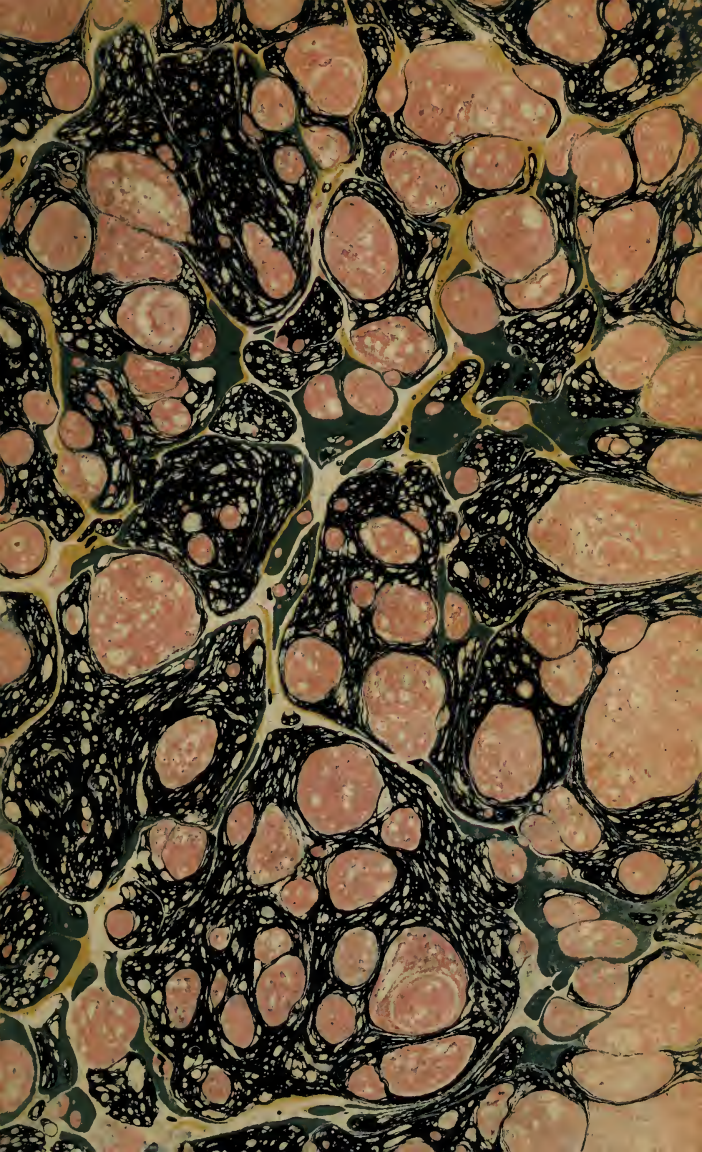
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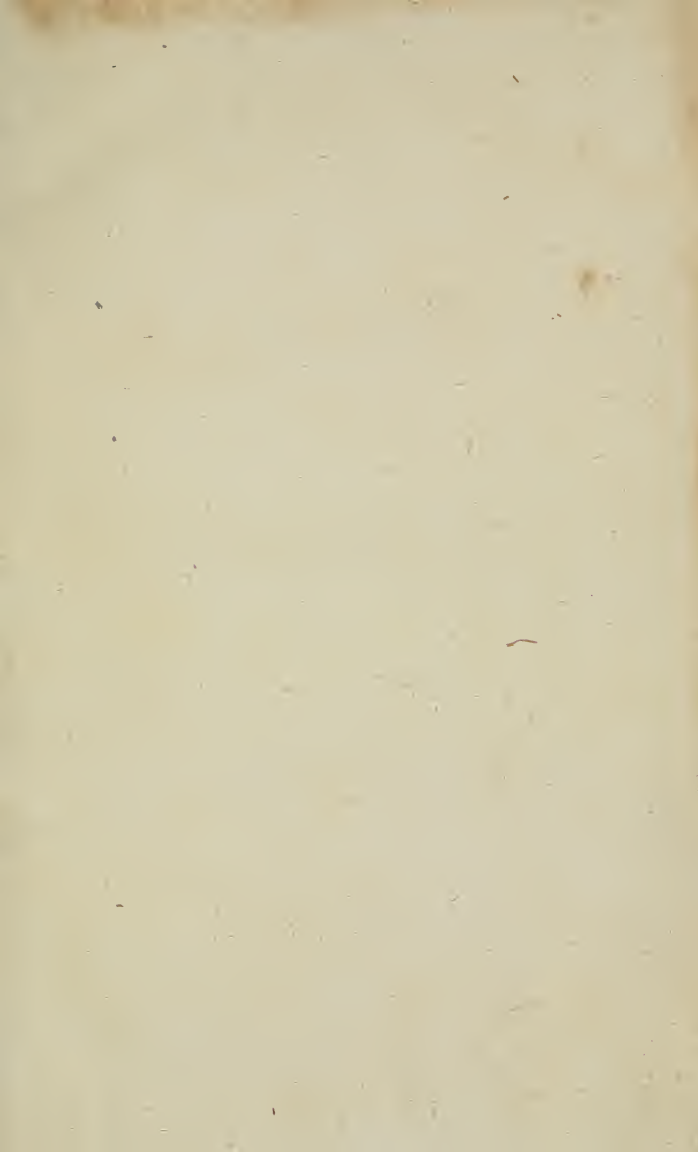
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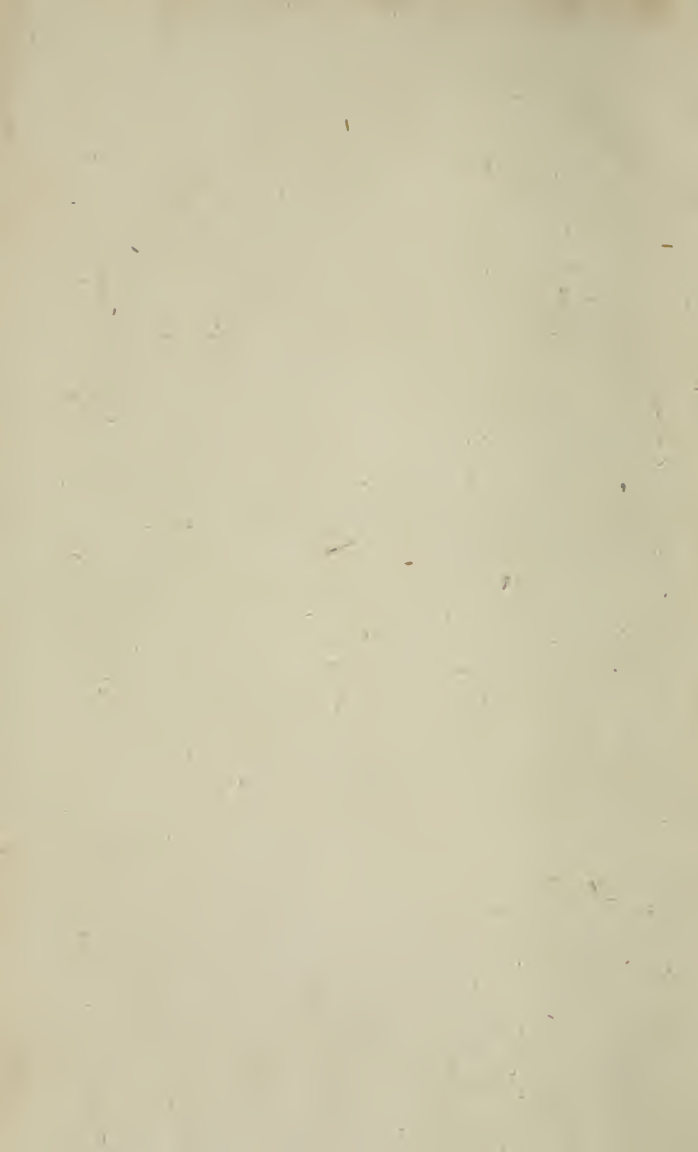
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JULIA DE VIENNE.

VOL. II.

In the Press,
A WINTER IN PARIS,
OR
MEMOIRS OF MADAME DE C****,
written by herself,
COMPRISING
ANECDOTES AND SKETCHES
OF
SEVERAL DISTINGUISHED CHARACTERS
IN THAT CAPITAL,
Three Vols.

JULIA.

DE

V I E N N E.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.



IMITATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY A LADY.



VOL. II.

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JULIA DE VIENNE.

“ ’Tis a prison ! ’ she said in a faint voice. “ Great God ! ’tis a prison ! what have I done to occasion my being sent to this horrible place ? ”

“ This is the Castle of Font Romeu,” said Madame Dumont gravely. “ It never was a prison, and is like all the castles in this part of the Pyrenees.”

Scarcely had Julia obtained this answer, when the carriage drove into a court-yard, the pavement of which was covered with grass and briars.

Madame Dumont expressed her pleasure at having reached the end of her journey ; and Julia, after ascending several stone steps, also covered with high weeds, wet with the dew, followed her into the castle.

A tall masculine woman, whose dress resembled that worn by the young female Julia had met in the wood, presented herself at the entrance of the hall, holding in her hand a dark lantern. Madame Dumont gave her a sealed paper, which she seemed to read with particular attention. Whilst she was thus occupied, Julia attentively examined her features, and her survey added terror to the affliction she had before experienced.

The strong and marked features of

this woman, her eyes sunk in their orbits, darting a gloomy fire—her look, in which every bad passion was expressed, inspired a sentiment of horror it was impossible to subdue.

Julia, creeping close to Madame Dumont, grasped her arm, and seemed to implore her protection. Madame Dumont, whose private sensations were nearly similar to her own, pressed the hand of her young companion, and for the first time since the commencement of their journey allowed her countenance to exhibit some little appearance of feeling and kindness.

The woman having finished reading her letter, turned round, and in a masculine and sonorous voice, invited them to follow her to the chamber intended

for their use. To reach it, they traversed a long range of apartments, the greater number of which, dilapidated by time, presented only the shapeless vestige of their former magnificence. Gilding, covered with smoke, fragments of pannels scattered over the inlaid floors, almost hidden by a thick coat of dust, ancient family portraits suspended against the wainscot, and obliquely reflected by the lantern carried by the woman, appeared like a long file of menacing spectres... helmets, cuirasses, and flags waving in the arched ceiling, altogether presented objects so very appalling and melancholy, that Julia's soul sunk under the impression of terror. With unsteady steps she ^{continued} ~~contrived~~ to walk

by the side of Madame Dumont, whose arm she still grasped with all her strength, as if fearful that support would escape her.

Having reached the room in which they were to pass the night, their conductress placed the lantern on a gothic chimney-piece, which was supported on each side by colossal statues of black marble; then taking up a species of goat-herd's horn, that was hung up near the window, she sounded it so loudly, that the shrill blast reverberated through all the apartments of the castle. A man and a young female immediately attended, the woman gave them orders in a language unknown to her guests, and some minutes after

they returned with lighted wax candles, and provisions for supper.

Whilst they were occupied in arranging the table, and preparing for the night, Madame Dumont, and the woman whom Julia now heard called Bridget, retired into an adjoining closet, where they remained in close conference about half an hour. When they returned, Julia thought she perceived some tears moisten Madame Dumont's eye-lashes. The latter advanced towards her, kissed her affectionately, and observing her excessive paleness and extreme dejection, entreated her to be calm, and to fear nothing : she added—

“ Miss Bridget has promised to take

care of you, and pay you every possible attention. I have said a good deal to her about your natural gentleness, and the submission I have invariably observed in you during our journey."

"She may depend on my civility, if she continues to be a good girl," replied Miss Bridget, with a smile which Julia thought an hideous grimace...

"I am naturally good-natured when I am not contradicted, but, by the Virgin, if I am provoked, I cast off the lamb and become the tiger."

Julia, terrified by the threatening look that accompanied Miss Bridget's last words, threw herself into Madame Dumont's arms, and burst into tears.

"Do not alarm yourself, my dear

child," said Madame Dumont, with gentleness. " You perceive it will depend wholly on yourself to obtain Miss Bridget's good-will."

" Certainly, certainly," replied the latter, " I will give her all the liberty here she can desire, if I am satisfied with her behaviour, which I have no doubt about. Come, child, don't cry, let's kiss, and be friends." On finishing these words, she seized Julia with a sinewy arm, and imprinted on her lovely cheeks, still wet with her tears, two rude kisses, notwithstanding the disgust involuntarily expressed by the innocent object of her rough caresses; she, however, to the great relief of Julia, soon wished her guests a good night,

saying, she would inquire how they had rested in the morning, and quitted the room, accompanied by the two servants.

Left alone with Madame Dumont, Julia claimed her promise of informing her where she at present was, and the intended period of her exile.

“ You are in Bearne,” replied Madame Dumont: “ the castle you inhabit is called, as I before told you, Font Romeu. Of the term of your exile I am entirely ignorant. I believe, however, it will not be of long duration, and in a great measure depends on your docility, and submission to your aunt’s orders.”

“ Ah !” exclaimed Julia, “ have I ever failed in my obedience to her ?

and ought I to have expected such cruel treatment, particularly at the moment when ——”

Nearly suffocated by her sobs, she could add no more, and continued to weep bitterly.

Madame Dumont remained silent, and seemed to have resumed the same frigid manners she had worn during their journey.

“ May I know,” at length added Julia, “ if this castle belongs to Madame de Seligny, and if that frightful woman is in her service ?”

“ I am forbidden to answer those two questions,” replied Madame Dumont, “ or rather, I could not satisfy you ; for when my mistress gave me the order to conduct you here, it never

occurred to me to ask if this castle belonged to her. I, however, presume it does, for she has too many estates of her own to require those of her friends."

Julia sighed deeply, and still wept in silence. Madame Dumont, excessively fatigued by travelling, told her it was time to take rest, and they both, after partaking of a slight supper, retired to their respective bed-rooms.

Julia, notwithstanding her grief, soon slept soundly, and she did not awake the next morning until the castle clock had struck eleven.

Her first impulse was to open the heavy curtains of her bed, hoping Madame Dumont, who had slept in the adjoining room, might have come

to see her ; but after convincing herself no one had entered her chamber, she got up, and dressed without any noise, fearful of awaking her fellow traveller, whom she supposed still asleep. She then approached the casement, the painted glass of which, covered by a thick coat of dust, prevented her distinguishing any exterior objects. After passing half an hour in examining the many pieces of ancient furniture which ornamented her room, and being unable longer to curb her impatience, she ventured to push open Madame Dumont's door, and advancing on tip-toe, gently drew aside the bed-curtains, but was nearly petrified by surprise, at not seeing the person she expected to find there.

She searched all over, called repeatedly, but no one answered her. She then anxiously examined every part of the room, looked behind each article of massy furniture, but in vain. At length she perceived a door concealed from casual observation by the tapestry. She hastily pushed it open, and descended a flight of narrow stairs, that conducted her to one of the large parlours she had passed through with so much terror on the preceding evening, and which now appeared less dismal, as the sun-beams glittered through several gothic windows.

A little recovered from her fears, she conjectured that possibly Madame Dumont was with Miss Bridget, and

she endeavoured to find her way to the hall; but after traversing about twenty rooms, all opening into each other, she found herself in a long gloomy gallery. She was stopping a moment to consider on which side she ought to direct her steps, having entirely lost her way, and not knowing how to regain her own room, when a voice apparently issuing from one of the angles of the gallery, loudly called “Who is there?” Julia, too much alarmed to answer, immediately ran onwards, she knew not whither—but violent bursts of laughter behind her inducing her to look back, she beheld Miss Bridget, whose mirth prevented utterance, beckoning her to approach nearer.

The timid orphan slowly obeyed, and her rude hostess seizing one of her hands, in a tone of ridicule asked if she had mistaken her for a ghost.

“No,” replied Julia, in a tremulous voice, “but I.... I was looking for Madame Dumont,”

“Madame Dumont !” replied Bridget, with fresh bursts of laughter; “by my conscience she is far enough off by this time.”

“Great God !” exclaimed Julia, “is she gone ?” Can she have thus cruelly abandoned me, without giving me one word of consolation ?”

“Only look at this poor girl,” said Bridget ironically, shaking Julia’s hand with a strength that extorted from

her a scream ; “ only see how much she is really to be pitied for being left here with me ! She wants consolation, forsooth,” she added, trying to imitate Julia’s sweet tone of voice. “ Consolation—but I must beg, Miss Affectation, that we have no more of these dolefuls. I don’t like them, and if you wish us to be friends, you must have the goodness to assume quite a different style. Come, walk before me, and let us go to breakfast. If you behave prettily, perhaps I shall allow you to walk in the park, whenever you are so inclined.”

Julia, scarcely able to conceal her excessive terror, did not answer a word, but accompanied Bridget into a small parlour, where the breakfast was

prepared. She seated herself trembling at the table, and took the bowl of milk handed to her by Bridget, and lifted it to her lips without daring to raise her eyes.

“ Why don’t you eat, child ? ” said Bridget, in rather a gentle tone.

Julia looked at her, tried to smile, and received the bit of cake offered to her. Her agitation had entirely taken away her appetite ; but fear of Bridget induced her to eat, lest her refusal might irritate this formidable Argus.

This agreeable tête-à-tête had endured about a quarter of an hour, when the door opened, and the same young girl whom Julia had met in

the wood on the preceding day, entered the room.

“Good morning, Isabella,” said Bridget; “how are our neighbours? I hope they are pleased at the indulgence I granted you? Come hither, here is a companion for you; she is just arrived: pray try to enliven her a little, and mind you tell her how very kind I am when I am not contradicted or put out of humour. What! wont you answer? Why, you look as if you were scared. Do you intend to answer, child, or not?” she added with anger.

“Pardon me, aunt,” said Isabella, in a voice so peculiarly sweet and harmonious, that Julia felt the interest

created in her bosom at the first moment of meeting the stranger, now considerably encreased. “Pardon me, but I am so greatly surprised.... Is it true that this young lady is to live here?”

“Certainly it is, and I have already informed her on what conditions she may hope to obtain my good-will. I leave it to you, Isabella, to tell her what punishment I can inflict should she ever dare to disobey me.”

Isabella turned pale, looked on the floor, and remained some minutes without answering; then giving Julia a look, in which was blended kindness and commiseration, said:—

“I am very sure my amiable companion, when experiencing from us all

the care and attention she merits, will never give you cause for displeasure," and finishing this sentence, she approached Julia, and pressed her hand most affectionately.

Our poor orphan, affected even to tears by this mark of kindness (the first she had received since her departure from Touraine), expressed her gratitude to the lovely Isabella; and mentally congratulated herself that heaven in its bounty had bestowed on her the comfort of a friend, in her present dreadful and undeserved exile.

"Now all this is quite right, my dear little girls; I like to see this good understanding between ye; but tell me, Isabella, where is Ximéo—why did he not return with you?"

“He remains at the cottage,” Isabella answered in a gentle voice. “It was his father who conducted me to the gates of the castle.”

Bridget, extremely displeased at this answer, added some words in the language of the province, which seemed greatly to terrify Isabella, and then abruptly left the room.

Scarcely had she closed the door after her, when the plaintive moanings of a dog were heard.

“Oh, my poor Silvio!” said Isabella, hastening to open the door. The animal came in, and instantly sought a refuge close to his mistress, whom he loaded with caresses.

“Poor Silvio!” repeated Isabella, her eyes filling with tears, “thou hast

been ill treated, because I love thee ! Young lady," she added, turning towards Julia, who recognised in Silvio the beautiful dog she had admired in the wood, " you see my best friend, the only being who feels for the wretched Isabella : if you knew the services this interesting animal renders me, you would not be surprised at my attachment to him."

Julia kindly patted Silvio, and after conversing for some minutes with her new friend, she proposed a walk in the grounds, as she had not yet seen the park.

Isabella consented, but hinted the necessity of obtaining Bridget's permission, before they ventured out of the castle.

“ Ah !” said Julia, “ it is then as I imagined. This is a prison, and I am condemned to pass in it the period of my banishment.”

Isabella appeared greatly astonished at this exclamation ; she drew her chair close to Julia’s, and fixed upon her a look of curiosity, mingled with compassion.

“ Do not afflict yourself,” she said most affectionately, “ you are not more a prisoner than myself, for never do I leave the interior of the castle without permission ; it has seldom been refused to me, and I am very sure you will always obtain it as readily as I have done.”

Bridget at this moment returned to the room, and hearing Isabella’s last

words, she gave Julia a gentle touch on the shoulder, saying: " You may walk all day with Isabella, if you wish it ; she will take care to point out the limits, which you must never exceed, Should you dare to pass beyond them, I —— but I command you, child, to give your new friend a description of the dungeon in the South tower.— Good day, children. Go, and leave me to myself."

Isabella took the hand of her new companion, gently drew it under her arm, and led her out of the room ; whilst Julia, shuddering at the idea of the dungeon in the South tower, could scarcely sustain herself.

The refreshing air she enjoyed under the thick foliage of a group of trees,

situated at the entrance of the park, through whose luxuriant branches the sun-beams could not penetrate, insensibly calmed Julia's fears. The heavy pressure on her heart seemed evaporating; she leaned her head on Isabella's shoulder, and found herself relieved by allowing her tears to flow; then sorrowfully turning her eyes on Isabella's countenance, she said, "Am I not too unfortunate?"

"If the miseries of others could divert your attention from dwelling on your own afflictions, or by a comparison of evils, make you see your own position through a less gloomy medium," said Isabella in a gentle voice, "hear my unhappy story—it will teach you gratitude to providence, for mak-

ing you any thing in this world but the friendless poor orphan before you."

Julia dried her tears, turned towards her companion, and impressively said, "you little know how very unhappy I am. May heaven preserve you from ever experiencing what I now endure, and have yet to suffer! Have you from your childhood been weighed down by humiliations, and every species of mortification?"

"Yes," said Isabella, with quickness.

"Has your confidence ever been betrayed?" resumed Julia.

"No, for in him only have I placed it," replied Isabella, pointing to the dog sleeping at her feet.

"Have they," continued Julia, her

tears flowing with encreased bitterness, “ have they torn you, in the most inhuman manner, torn you from him you love, and that too at a moment when you expected to be united to him for ever ? ”

“ Oh no,” said Isabella, sighing deeply, “ for in such a case I know I should have died.”

The imagination of each travelling to objects most dear to their recollection, they for some time remained silent ; but that necessity of disclosing the sensations so imperious in the spring of life, soon impelled them to resume the conversation. These two young creatures, acquainted with each other little more than two hours, firmly believed they had reciprocally found a

friend. Fallacious illusions of youth! which hurry us by a path so full of flowers, into the rough career of experience, how many self-reproaches, regrets, and bitter remembrances you leave us !

“ May I venture to ask you,” said Julia, “ if that frightful woman, on whom at present depends my fate, is attached to you by the ties of consanguinity, or if it is merely by her desire you call her aunt ? ”

“ Alas ! ” replied Isabella, “ an orphan from the moment of my birth, I have never known any other relation than herself. It is by her care I exist. My first looks met her’s, and my earliest sensation was terror.”

“ How I pity you,” replied Julia

sighing; “ I also am an orphan: a cruel and unfeeling aunt in a similar manner took the charge of me; it is by her orders I am here. Ah! my dear Isabella,” she added, affectionately, “ heaven in depriving us of our parents, and in rendering our destinies so alike, also contrived for us the sweet consolation of friendship. We shall each be the comfort and support of the other in this dreadful solitude. Relate to me your misfortunes, and tell me every particular of that horrid Bridget who causes me so much terror.”

“ An unremitting severity,” replied Isabella, “ and the most cruel and severe punishments for the most trivial faults have been my portion from my earliest infancy: saturated with tears,

sinking under an iron yoke, I attained my sixth year, without having known or even surmised what was happiness ; when one day, the brightest in my life— Ah! dear young lady,” added Isabella, with much feeling ; “ how can I ever find words to describe the delightful sensation with which the mere recollection of that day fills my soul. I was sitting with Bridget, who, displeased at my not having finished some embroidery she was instructing me how to execute, had condemned me to remain without nourishment until I had finished my task. My eyes, filled with tears, and weakened by an abstinence so injurious at my age, could with difficulty follow the needle my trembling fingers guided. In a moment we heard several

voices in the hall, and shortly afterwards two servants entered the room, and announced to Bridget Madame de Florange and her children; her carriage had just broken down, and she wished to be admitted into the castle until the accident could be repaired.

“The exalted reputation of this lady, who was the widow of a lieutenant-general, and whose estate was situated at two leagues distance from Font Romeu, together with the respect due to her rank, so greatly awed Bridget, that she dared not refuse her the asylum she solicited; therefore, after ordering me to my bed-chamber, there to continue my work; she went out to receive her guests: but she had scarcely

taken three steps towards fulfilling her intention, before Madame de Florange, followed by her children, entered the room where we were.

“What a lovely little girl!” exclaimed the lady, on perceiving me; ‘I never saw any creature so beautiful. What ails you, my dear child?’ she added, taking me in her arms. ‘Why do you cry?’

“I cry because I am hungry; I have not tasted any food since yesterday,” I answered with the innocence natural to my age.

“What, ma’am!” cried Madame de Florange, throwing a glance over Miss Bridget’s person, that conveyed anger and indignation; ‘is it possible you

can have had the cruelty to conduct yourself thus towards this sweet child?’

“She is my own niece,” quickly retorted Bridget, ‘and I suppose I have a title to act towards her as best pleases my fancy.’

“Certainly not,” replied Madame de Florange, with encreased displeasure; ‘and if she has no relative nearer than yourself, the laws shall protect her—I will this night address a letter to the civil governor of——, who is my intimate friend; he will take care, I can assure you, to withdraw her from your shameful treatment. Sweet innocent! How pale she is!’ she added, leaning towards me; ‘dear child, I will take you to Florange for a few days; and

if Miss Bridget wishes to make her peace with me, she will not offer one word in opposition to my desire.'

"Bridget, who really feared Madame de Florange would, as she had said, write to the civil governor, and that the latter would remove me from the castle, endeavoured to assume a gracious manner, and replied to Madame de Florange, that the honour she intended her niece was too great not to be sensibly felt by her, and that she thankfully consented to my departure.

"Madame de Florange, satisfied with this answer, ordered her servants to bring in the refreshments she had in the carriage. Bridget, also desirous of paying her every possible respect, added some fruits and cream; and was even

eager to offer them to me, addressing me with a softness of manner I had never before experienced : but the circumstance I shall cherish in my remembrance so long as my heart continues to beat, was the feeling and care with which Henry, the youngest of Madame de Florange's children, more than the rest, interested himself for me, and attended to my comforts."

Isabella stopped, blushed, looked on the ground, and added with much feeling:—"He was the first who opened my heart to gratitude! and this sweet sentiment was soon followed by another, which will constitute the happiness or misery of my existence."

Tears of sympathy moistened Julia's eye-lashes; she took Isabella's hand

and placed it on her heart without uttering a word. "Henry," continued Isabella, "seemed overjoyed, when his mother expressed her intention of taking me home with her; he placed his chair close to mine, offered me whatever was best in the collation before us, kissed me repeatedly, and whispered in my ear that he was delighted at having a little companion to share his pleasures, for his brothers were so much older than himself, that they would never play with him.

"You perhaps wonder," Isabella added, "these trifling incidents should dwell in my memory; but if you will reflect for one moment on the wretched life I had led until that period, you will readily conceive how forcibly the

first impressions of happiness must have been delineated on my youthful imagination.

“ When the collation was ended, Bridget wished to take me away to dress me in my best cloaths; but Henry perceiving my terror at the idea of being left alone with her, declared he would not quit his little sister (for thus he already named me), and taking me by the hand, we together followed Bridget.

“ The latter, restrained by the presence of my young friend, dared not conduct herself towards me in her usual unkind manner; she therefore merely enjoined me to obey Madame de Florange, which I from my heart

promised to do; and we returned to the parlour.

“Madame de Florange’s carriage had been repaired, and I took leave of Bridget, with a sensation of joy which until that moment I had been a stranger to. As to Henry, he expressed his delight in so noisy a manner, that his mother was obliged several times to check his impetuous delight.

“At length we arrived at Florange, where I spent eight inexpressible happy days. I was loaded with kindnesses by the mistress of the house, caressed by her children, carefully attended by the servants—all my wishes and fancies were anticipated by my dear Henry, the faithful companion of all

my steps. You will ^{not} be surprised to hear that I gave a piercing shriek and fainted when Madame de Florange mentioned to me her intention of taking me back to Font Romeu, and it was only after obtaining her solemn promise to see me frequently, and that I should pass a week in every month with her, that I could be sufficiently recovered to be placed in the carriage which was to convey me to my miserable home.

“ I will abridge this perhaps too tedious recital of the incidents that occurred in my very youthful days, and will merely tell you that Bridget, intimidated by the threats of my generous protectress, treated me with less barbarity: I went regularly every month

to Florange. Henry each day became more attached to me, and I so artlessly returned his tenderness, that Madame de Florange began to be alarmed. I was just seventeen, and Henry had attained his nineteenth year; he was taller and better grown than is usual at that age. They talked of soon placing him in a regiment of cavalry, in which his two elder brothers already served; and the grief with which he received this information convinced his mother of her impropriety in having permitted our sentiments for each other, to 'grow with our growth.' From that period her visits to Font Romeu were less frequent; and when I went to Florange she carefully prevented the possibility of my convers-

ing with her son, by constantly keeping me near herself. This restraint, to which we were unaccustomed, produced an effect exactly opposite to the one she intended. Henry, ardent, loving passionately, and above all, possessing extreme sensibility, sought every occasion to express his affection; and, notwithstanding his mother's vigilance, we sometimes had clandestine meetings, when we invariably repeated the oath to love each other until death. Alas! those moments of happiness soon fled—perhaps never to return.

“ One evening as I was leaning out of the window, conversing with my dear Henry, Madame de Florange sud-

denly came into the room, and on hearing her son swear never to marry any other than me, she could not suppress her anger. ‘It certainly is very becoming in you, sir,’ she said, ‘thus to dispose of yourself without my consent.’ And turning towards me, she added with an accent of reproach: ‘Isabella, ought I to have expected such ingratitude from you, after the kindness and almost maternal affection I have shewn you from your infancy?’

“Ah, madam! my generous, my beloved benefactress!” I replied, kneeling at her feet; ‘punish me, crush me with the weight of your displeasure, for if to love Henry, to value him more than my existence is a crime, I am

indeed guilty. But do not say, oh! no! never say you think me ungrateful!

“Are you not my real mother?” I added sobbing, ‘do I not owe to you every thing? But for your humanity should I ever have known happiness! should I ever have known——’

“The name of Henry was on my lips, but I dared not pronounce it; and remained nearly drowned in tears.

“My dearest mother!” exclaimed Henry.

“Leave me, sir,” said Madame de Florange, with asperity; she then closed the window, and ordered me to follow her to her room.

“I obeyed in silence, and on giving a last look towards the garden, I saw

my beloved Henry pensively walking, his arms folded across his bosom, apparently in the deepest dejection of spirits.

“ Sit down, Isabella,” said Madame de Florange, when we had reached the chamber ; ‘ attend to what I am going to say to you, and never let this conversation be effaced from your memory. I will not again upbraid you with ingratitude : that accusation escaped me in the first moments of my anger, and I am now aware of its injustice ; for if any one merits a reproach in this affair it can only be myself : I ought to have foreseen what has occurred—now, enlightened by experience, I must at least try to repair my error, and it is you, my dear Isabella, who will assist me in

undertaking this perhaps *difficult*, but not *impossible* task, if you really possess the delicacy and principle I have with delight observed the promise of in you. Brought up in retirement, you are not aware, my dear child, of the imperious duties which persons of Henry's birth and situation in life owe to society. He cannot, without dishonouring himself in the opinion of his equals, unite his fate with your's. The niece of Bridget, housekeeper at the Chateau of Font Romeu, can never become the wife of M. de Florange. I, probably as much as yourself, lament this rigorous law, which I fear will occasion much unhappiness to my son and yourself: but I must submit to it, and I value upon your attachment and the

gratitude you owe me, for your also becoming submissive to what is inevitable—I therefore flatter myself you will from this moment relinquish every idea of an alliance with Henry de Florange, and that you also carefully avoid every occasion of nourishing a sentiment, the danger and impropriety of which you are now fully aware of.’

“ Relinquish Henry !” I said, believing myself dying from the horror of my sensations ; ‘ oh ! madam, never.... never.’ I felt a dreadful pain in my heart, and for some minutes I lost the power of utterance. I heard Madame de Florange’s voice, without understanding what she was saying ; animation seemed suspended, and I only recovered the use of my senses by

volatile spirits, kindly administered by the hand of my benefactress.

“ When I was able again to attend to Madamede Florange, I cast a supplicating look on her countenance, and perceived on it an expression of feeling she vainly endeavoured to conceal; under an affectation of severity. I knelt at her feet, and laying her hand on my burning head, entreated her to retract the cruel sentence she had just pronounced.

“ ‘The established etiquettes of life require great sacrifices,’ she replied with kindness; ‘and I yield to these prejudices in preventing my son from forming an alliance the rules of society would disallow. Reflect, Isabella, I beg of you, on what I have said—to-

morrow I shall conduct you to Font Romeu ; I will frequently see you there, if your conduct pleases me ; but you must not return to Florange until Henry has joined his regiment.'

" I spent the remainder of the evening, and all the night, in sorrow and tears ; and, early the next day, we got into the carriage, without my being permitted to see Henry.

" I maintained a sullen silence during our drive, and when we approached near to Font Romeu, Madame de Florange again attempted to extort from me a promise to forget her son.

" A deep sigh was my only answer ; for my heart, devoted for ever to Henry, revolted at the idea of perjury. Madame de Florange, indignant at

what she erroneously termed my self-love and ambition, quitted me in displeasure, and left me with Bridget, oppressed with sorrow and hopeless affection.

“ Several days elapsed, and I heard nothing of Madame de Florange or Henry. Even Bridget, who had importuned me with questions when I first returned to Font Romeu, now affected carefully to avoid every subject that could in the remotest degree be connected with persons ever present to my imagination, or rather to my heart. She frequently smiled ironically, when I was more than usually dejected, and seemed to enjoy my extreme grief.

“ One afternoon I was taking a soli-

tary walk towards the extremity of the park, when this dog, the gift of my beloved Henry," added Isabella, shewing Silvio, " darted through an aperture of the wall, and was soon out of my sight. Surprised at his sudden absence, and fearful of losing him, I followed through the opening the road I had seen him take, and pursued the track of his feet, calling him with all my strength.

" I had just traversed a little path that led towards a stream, at which I supposed he had probably gone to drink, when I perceived him hastening to me with every demonstration of joy: he barked, jumped upon me, and ran a few steps towards the spot from whence I had seen him come

out; then, returning, fawned on me, and seemed to invite me to follow him. I at first paid but little attention to these playful tricks, and reproved him for his unwillingness to return with me into the park; but so far from obeying me with his usual alacrity, he again left me, and took the road towards a cluster of rocks at a little distance. This conduct seemed so very extraordinary that I went on, notwithstanding the terror I felt at being alone in such an unfrequented place; and I had only advanced a few steps, when I perceived a little ball of paper on the grass, which the wind blew on before me. I picked it up, and with inexpressible surprise read these words, written with a pencil:

“ Henry waits for you at the entrance of the grotto on the left of the stream; Isabella, do not refuse to come, and once again receive from his lips the oath of living for you—or of dying, still your’s.”

“ Henry !” I exclaimed, with almost frantic joy, “ Oh ! my Henry ! Several echoes repeated Henry ! Henry ! and soon I saw this adored friend at my side, followed by Silvio.

“ Do not believe, my sweet Julia,” continued Isabella, “ that any words I can find will ever express the feelings of delight I experienced at hearing the voice of Henry a thousand times repeating, on his knees, that I was his only friend ! his sister ! his companion ! the beloved wife of his heart ! Manly

tears accompanied this effusion of his affection — mine were mingled with them — how sweetly soothing were those tears ! how greatly did they mitigate the load of sorrow with which absence had oppressed our hearts !

“ Dearest Henry,” at length I said, when a little able to govern my sensations, ‘ what will become of us ? How shall we obey your mother, who commands us to forget each other ? She spoke to me of your birth—the prejudices of the world : she says you will be dishonoured by an union with a poor girl like me.’

“ Do not repeat those hateful words,” said Henry, interrupting me ; ‘ I have heard them but too frequently during the last few days : of what importance

is the world, its absurd and illiberal prejudices? What! am I to be dishonoured for chusing thee for my companion? thee, my sweet, gentle, adored Isabella? Great God! how can I hear, without madness, such blasphemy! Let them retain their empty honours, those pitiful advantages on which they so proudly value themselves: I give them up, I relinquish them for ever! I am, thank heaven, the youngest of my family: my mother has two other sons—they will support for me the adventitious honour of this noble birth, which I despise and detest: Isabella, my darling Isabella, is the only blessing I claim.'

"Dearest friend," I said, pressing one of Henry's hands in both of mine,

‘you must be right: my heart agrees but too well with your’s; for I feel that the most splendid advantages riches could command would be to me insupportable, unless you shared them with me; but we are very young, where shall we go? How can I escape from Bridget’s authority? What objections can you oppose to your mother’s wishes of your joining the regiment in which your two brothers already are?’

“Alas!” replied Henry gravely, ‘I know not yet how fate will dispose of us: let us, however, submit to all but a sacrifice of our affections: I will conceal nothing from my sweet girl. I have promised to go into the army,

and in two days I leave Florange to join my regiment.'

" Henry, seeing me turn pale at this information, supported me in his arms, saying with tenderness :—' Hear all I have to say. The hazardous step I have this day ventured to take was merely to tell you my ideas, intentions, and hopes—yes, my hopes,' he added, exultingly. ' You, my Isabella, will for ever remain the adored companion, chosen by my heart; but we are destitute of fortune, and a thousand obstacles oppose our happiness. I must then enter the career elected on for me, and which alone offers the means of an honourable existence for myself and my beloved. War is declared

against Prussia: I am assured my regiment is one of those intended for Germany. I shall go, shall fight against the enemies of my country: Isabella! thy name shall be my device: animated by the remembrance of thee, Henry will attain to glory! Love, all powerful love, will inspire me to deeds of valour! I shall be promoted in the field of battle! Yes, I swear it by thee and by my honour! The appointments of my rank will then satisfy our ambition: I will fly to thee, and thou wilt become my sweet recompence.'

“ Whilst Henry was speaking, a dreadful chill had crept through my veins: I fixed my eyes on him, unable to utter a syllable: the idea of his go-

ing, of being far away from me, occasioned a sensation impossible to describe: it was a species of vague terror, mingled with surprise and grief. But when he spoke of war and battles, my heart was agonized; its vibration seemed to cease; a mist spread itself before my eyes; they no longer distinguished even Henry: I made an effort to speak, held out my arms to him, and fell senseless at his feet.

“ The burning tears of my unhappy friend, and his kind attentions, recalled my understanding, and I heard him say—‘ Isabella! my sister! my wife! in mercy speak to me!’ ”

“ But pardon me, Julia,” said Isabella, drying the tears excited by her melancholy recollections; “ oh! par-

don me ! I believe I ought not to have dwelt so long on incidents uninteresting to every one but myself ; yet you would, I am sure, be more indulgent if you knew my dear Henry, and allow it to be impossible to speak about him with indifference.”

Julia hastened to assure Isabella that she should consider her unkind, if any of the incidents of her life, however trivial, were suppressed, and entreated her to continue her interesting recital.

“ Henry at length succeeded in calming the violence of my feelings,” resumed Isabella : “ he more fully explained to me his plans ; and I was forced to acknowledge their propriety, and allow them to be the best means

of bringing about our mutual and permanent happiness. But what more than any other thing tended to tranquillize me was the certainty that this dreaded separation could not take place before the next spring ; and the leaves were only then falling from the trees. Thus I had some months in which to familiarize myself to the idea of an absence, unfortunately but too necessary.

“ Henry told me that, during this interval, he hoped to be able sometimes to see me : he also promised to write to me every day, as his regiment was in garrison at Lourdes, a small town about two miles from Font Romeu ; and to prevent the necessity of confiding in any person of this neighbourhood, we adopted the following stratagem.

“ Henry was to send his letters by a messenger, who would have orders to deposit them behind a large stone in the grotto, near the stream: the same person was to carry back my answers, which he would always find ready for him. I was by this means to learn on what days my friend could escape from his military companions to come to me, when it was agreed that I should meet him at the grotto, where he was to wait for me. Henry added that for the last two days he had been most anxious to inform me of this arrangement; that he had made many fruitless attempts to see me, and had walked around the park and grounds daily, in the hope of meeting me; and having on that morning been as un-

successful as before, he was on the point of returning, when, on placing his ear close to an aperture in the wall, he heard the sound of advancing footsteps, which were rendered distinct by the earth being strewed over with the dried leaves recently fallen. His heart palpitated at the idea that possibly it might be me ; but his fear, lest I should be accompanied by Miss Bridget, induced him to remove from the wall:

“ Imagine what must have been my delight,” he continued, “ when on reaching the back part of the rocks I perceived Silvio at my feet : I caressed the sagacious animal, and recollecting that when at Florange we had both accustomed him to bring back paper balls we threw before him, I hastily

wrote with a pencil the note you found on the grass: Silvio took it in his mouth and ran from me, as if he had divined my wishes; and I still believe the joy he felt at seeing his old master, and meeting you on his way, prevented his acquitting himself of his commission with his usual fidelity; for I observed him from my place of concealment drop the paper, and hasten to his mistress.'

"I remained two whole hours with Henry," continued Isabella, "and the veil of night was already stretching over the country, when we separated. We agreed to see each other on the morrow, and I re-entered the park, not without some anxiety as to what Bridget might say to my long absence;

but, contrary to my calculation formed on her usual conduct, I found her in a tolerably good humour.

“Where have you been, Isabella?” she said: ‘during your absence I have received a visit from a person you greatly love; we talked about you all the time; I wish you had seen each other.’

“A person I love!” said I with energy; ‘then I am sure it was Madame de Florange.’

“Herself!” replied Bridget; ‘but if you knew the subject of our discourse, you would love her, I believe, still more. Would you think it, Isabella—she wants you to marry—she intends to give you a fortune; that is, she....’

“ She talks of my marrying! me!”
I interrupted; ‘ she! Madame de Florange?’

“ Yes, Madame de Florange,’ replied Bridget; ‘ the person she proposes is, in my opinion, a very suitable one—it is Ximeo, the son of M. Henry’s nurse. Well! I hope you will allow he is a very nice, clever youth?’

“ Dear aunt,’ I replied, in a trembling voice, ‘ in mercy permit me to retire to my room; I do not feel well: to-morrow we will speak on the subject of Madame de Florange’s intentions, which I acknowledge equally surprise and afflict me.’

“ On finishing these words I withdrew, not feeling inclined to receive the volley of abuse with which Bridget

was in the habit of assailing me, whenever I had the temerity to oppose her slightest wishes; indeed, I did hear her repeat some of her favourite invectives, amongst which I distinguished a threat of confining me in the dungeon of the south tower."

"Oh! my dear Isabella!" interrupted Julia, turning pale, "tell me all about that dungeon with which that horrible Bridget has also threatened me?"

"Compose yourself," replied Isabella, affectionately pressing her friend's hand: "God forbid you should ever be in a predicament to judge whether I have accurately described that frightful abode; at any rate, be assured you will not enter it alone; but it will

be easy for you to avoid that punishment: you must never exceed the boundaries of this park; and you have not, like me," added Isabella, sighing, "an inducement to venture every thing, rather than submit to this prohibition."

"Isabella," said Julia, in a faint voice, "tell me in what part of the castle this frightful prison is situated, and if you really believe my promise never to pass the park wall will insure me from the horrors of being confined in it."

"The sequel of my narrative will be the answer to your first question; and, with regard to the second, I believe Bridget will never dare to exert towards you that despotism and cruelty natural to her character. You are not,

as I am, a poor creature, abandoned by all nature.

“ Born in a superior class, the name and rank of your connections are, no doubt, known to this woman. How then can she venture to act towards you as she does to her unfortunate niece—a poor and friendless orphan, doomed to endure her caprices ?”

“ Ah !” cried Julia, a tear dropping from her eye-lash ; “ if I have no better protection than my relations, I am indeed lost !”

Isabella endeavoured to console her by the most tender and soothing expressions. Julia, grateful for the kindness of this amiable girl, kissed her with affection ; and, after exchanging promises of reciprocal friendship, Isa-

bella was about to resume the recital of her sorrows, when the goatherd's horn, used by Bridget, twice sounded in the park.

“ Let us hasten to the castle,” said Isabella; “ this is a command which cannot be resisted with impunity.”

Julia instantly arose, and ran towards the castle. The fear of displeasing Bridget gave her wings; and, without attending to Isabella, who called to her not to go so fast, she quite out of breath reached the centre of the hall.

Bridget was in the lower room, where the cloth was laid for dinner. The two friends seated themselves near her, but she did not deign to speak a word to them, or even answer some

questions Julia ventured to address to her: she appeared much out of humour, and never opened her lips, except to reprove the female servant who was arranging the dinner-table.

“What ails her?” said Julia, in a whisper to Isabella; “her savage looks make me tremble.”

“Do not be uneasy,” replied Isabella; “when you are more accustomed to her strange temper you will feel less alarm; she is frequently in these humours: we have only on these occasions to be more than usually careful not to displease her. Leave her to me! I know her disposition: say you but little, and let me manage the conversation.”

“What are you whispering about

there?" said Bridget, frowning; "I think you both very impertinent to have secret conversations in my presence!"

Julia was frightened: she looked down, and made no answer. "Aunt," said Isabella, with much sweetness, "we spoke in a low tone, because we were anxious not to disturb you. Julia is unhappy: she fears you are displeased at the dejection she allowed you to perceive this morning; and she was saying that if she were sure of your forgiveness, she would try to become cheerful. I was only endeavouring to comfort her with the hope of your pardon."

Bridget seemed satisfied with this explanation, but affected to speak only

the Bearnais language during dinner. Julia, who did not understand one word of this provincial dialect, could only conjecture from Isabella's agitation the angry manner of Bridget; and from Ximeo's name being frequently repeated, that the subject was an unpleasant one to her young friend.

When dinner was over, Bridget placed herself in an arm-chair, and soon fell asleep; Isabella then beckoning Julia to follow her, they both with equal eagerness quitted the dining-room.

"Come up stairs," said Isabella, "we shall be more pleasantly situated there than under the trees in the park, where the heat is at present intense."

They crossed a gallery that Julia

had not before seen, at the end of which were several apartments, more modern in the style of their arrangement than the rest of the castle. Isabella went into them all with Julia, and then conducted her to a smaller room, the windows of which overlooked a great extent of country.

“ You see my cell,” said Isabella, sighing, “ my beloved solitude, where I can peaceably meditate on my unfortunate destiny; but this is what renders it to me inestimable,” she added, drawing Julia towards one of the windows. “ The building you distinguish yonder, crowned by that fine wood, is the Castle of Florange; it is there I spent the happiest moments of my life—it is there my Henry was born!”

Isabella, whose voice was naturally soft and harmonious, pronounced these last words with a tone and emphasis so sweetly pathetic, that Julia, greatly affected, pressed the lovely girl to her heart, neither of them being capable of articulating a word. Altogether absorbed in their own reflections, Isabella kept her eyes fixed on the Castle of Florange; whilst Julia's still wandered over the wild and romantic landscape that on all sides presented itself.

The valley, contracted by several projecting rocks covered with shrubs, appeared like a green velvet carpet, at the end of which an enormous mass of granite united the two hills, and formed a species of portico, through which could be distinguished meadows,

orchards, and finally the Castle of Florange.

The horizon was bounded by the immense chain of the Pyrenees, whose majestic summits, covered with snow, glittered with the transcendent blaze of the glorious sun, and seemed to melt into the gold and azure clouds that flitted rapidly around them.

Julia at first felt all the enthusiasm which the sublime spectacle of nature ever creates in a rightly constituted mind. She humbly adored the all powerful author of such wonderful beauties. She raised her eyes towards heaven as if to implore the protection of her maker. Her heart felt oppressed, and turning towards her friend, she sorrowfully said :—

“ Isabella, I shall never again see De Montmorency !”

Her gentle companion feeling for her unhappiness, and anxious to divert her ideas from their melancholy channel, called her attention to the portraits that ornamented the room, Julia, in compliance with her friend’s wish, affected to examine them ; but it could easily be perceived, by her abstraction of mind, and the deep sighs which burst from her bosom, that her sorrow did not admit of any alleviation.

“ Whose picture is this ?” she cried, drawing Isabella towards a portrait large as life, representing a tall man, whose countenance, at once noble and gracious, excited the most lively interest.

“It is the resemblance of the Marquis de Senneville, father of the present proprietor of the castle,” replied Isabella.

“Great God! is it an illusion?” continued Julia; “these are the same eyes, the same turn of face as.... dear Isabella, tell me—explain to me, is it possible that Madame de Seligny is his daughter?”

“It is not Madame de Seligny, but the Countess de Montmorency who is——”

“The Countess de Montmorency!” said Julia, interrupting her with the greatest surprise. “What! this castle not belong to Madame de Seligny? I am then in the house of the Countess de Montmorency. All, all is now

explained ! I am indeed aware of the extent of my misfortune. Never, never shall I again see my Frederick !”

Julia threw herself into a chair, nearly suffocated by her tears.

“Isabella, respecting Julia’s sorrow, remained for some time silent. She soon, however, by the most soothing and affectionate expressions, induced her to relieve her heart, by disclosing her sorrows to the friend who sincerely loved her. Julia candidly related the history of her misfortunes, which more than once during the recital drew tears from the sensitive Isabella, who, too feeling to make use of common-place consolations, and too artless to employ insignificant palliatives or sophistical arguments, which are generally used

rather from self-love, and a desire to exhibit brilliant ideas and a happy choice of words, than from any sincerity of intention to ameliorate the miseries of the sufferer, did not conceal from Julia her fears that her present confinement would endure until they had exhausted every means of inducing the Count de Montmorency to marry Miss de Seligny.

“ But,” she added, “ if you are quite sure of your Frederick’s heart, of what consequence is an exile that cannot endure for ever? There only needs a little fortitude and patience; and during the interval we surely shall find some means of evading Bridget’s vigilance, so as to convey a letter to your friend, telling him where you are.”

“ Oh, my dear Isabella,” said Julia with delight, “ what claims you will have on my gratitude should you ever realize that hope !”

Isabella having imperceptibly calmed her friend’s mind, again assured her of her zeal and friendship, and very soon had the pleasure to observe Julia’s countenance assume its usual sweet serenity.

The conversation between the two friends now took a less serious character. They were both at that happy age when the sensations, always ardent though fickle, readily yield to the bright illusions of hope.

Julia, forgetting her fears and anxieties, with all the sanguine anticipations of youth already fancied herself

restored to De Montmorency, and in the full enjoyment of the happiness she had so cruelly been deprived of.

The artless, unsophisticated Isabella was delighted at having found a being with whom she could converse of Henry; and neither of them, whilst vowing everlasting and unalterable friendship, suspected that self-gratification was the real basis of their reciprocal attachment.

When they resumed their examination of the different objects in the room, a guitar, suspended by a blue ribbon near to Isabella's bed, attracted Julia's attention.

"Henry gave it to me," said Isabella: "he taught me to accompany my voice with this little instrument.

I can only sing the ballads he composed for me."

Julia expressed her wish to hear some of them, and Isabella, after an elegant prelude, sang several of those natural and affecting tunes peculiar to the mountaineers, and which, from their simplicity, reach the soul much sooner than the most laboured efforts of scientific excellence.

A soft melancholy succeeded the transient sensation of happiness Julia had enjoyed. She for some time attentively listened to the melodious notes of the interesting and sensitive Isabella, and then exclaimed:—

"Dearest friend, what a delightful perspective is delineated to my view, if by your efforts I should be restored

to De Montmorency. Oh! should I ever realize this first wish of my heart, then will our house become your asylum, and Henry need never more expose his life to all the horrors of war. United by the dearest ties, you will always be my sister, my companion; and De Montmorency will be the friend of your beloved Henry.

Isabella threw herself into Julia's arms; her lovely countenance expressed pleasure and surprise—tears of joy trembled in her eyes, and her heart, agitated by the hope of happiness, throbbed violently.

Julia, without giving her time to utter a word, continued rapidly to trace out the plan her fancy had conceived.

“How happy we shall be!” she exclaimed; “Isabella, how very happy we shall then be!”

Dear innocent girl! the glowing colours of thy imagination had not as yet been faded by cruel experience!—thy bloom of hope had not been blighted on the very eve of fruition!

Isabella attentively listened to all she said—wept, smiled, and uttered some broken sentences; then clasping her hands together, and raising her eyes to heaven, she repeated with Julia:—

“How very happy we then shall be!”

The setting sun darted its flaming rays on the tops of the mountains; the shades of twilight, stretching along the valley, rendered the objects in the room scarcely distinct; and still the

two friends conversed with the same energy on their anticipated happiness.

At last Isabella said :—

“ Alas! Henry, my beloved Henry is already gone; even now his precious life is exposed to the dreadful casualties of war! Oh, Julia!” she added dejectedly, “shall I ever realize the blessings your friendship promises me?”

Julia endeavoured to disperse the gloomy ideas that oppressed the heart of her companion, by entreating her to continue the interesting recital which Bridget had interrupted at dinner time.

“ It is now too late,” replied Isabella; “that shocking woman will soon expect us to return; but to-morrow, if

you please, I will resume my melancholy narrative."

She then proposed a walk in the park, to enjoy the delightful evening breeze. They went to the long terrace that bounded the front of the castle, where they found Bridget seated on a bench, employed in scolding the gardener for his careless neglect of some flowers she was partial to.

The sweet satisfaction that shone on Julia's countenance did not escape Bridget's observation, who, attributing this change to the order she had given her, never to appear unhappy in her presence, was gratified by the promptitude with which her prisoner had obeyed her, and she addressed the dear girl in as gentle a tone as the

natural sharpness of her voice would permit.

Julia, on her part agreeably surprised, gave herself up to all the cheerfulness natural to her age, and by her sprightly sallies frequently induced a smile from the ferocious Bridget.

“Observe, Isabella,” she said, “how amiable your companion is!—she knows how to amuse me; but you, with your doleful and languishing ways, would make the most lively creature in the world go melancholy mad.”

“Oh!” said Julia, “I hope and think you will not long have occasion to complain of her. I mean to keep her in order, I promise you; she shall not long go moping about.”

Julia, saying this, pressed her friend's hand, who, perfectly understanding the allusion, affected a gaiety until now inconsistent with her character and situation.

Bridget remained in pretty good humour all the rest of the evening. Julia took advantage of this happy disposition, to request the favour of having a room near to Isabella's, which was immediately granted.

Julia playfully employed herself in removing her clothes; and Isabella, although she sometimes smiled at her friend's vivacity, yet was astonished to see her so quickly familiarized to a position that only a few hours before had caused her tears so bitterly to flow. She thought of Henry, and wondered

how absence from a beloved object could be endured with so much fortitude.

This reflection gave a grave and serious expression to her lovely features, which Julia soon observed, and rallied her on what she termed her obstinacy in cherishing unpleasant ideas. She threatened her with complaining to Henry, and again recurred to anticipations of the happiness that awaited both of them.

“ Ah, Julia !” said Isabella sighing, “ how can the mind dwell on an uncertain future, whilst the present is so painful to endure ! Are you not two hundred leagues from De Montmorency ? Am I not also separated from my dear Henry ? and is he not surrounded by a thousand dangers ? ”

Julia kept her eyes fixed on the ground for a few moments, without uttering a word ; then looking at her friend, observed in her's an expression of such deep melancholy, that all her spirits instantly vanished. She silently pressed Isabella's hand to her heart, and retired to the new room intended for her.

The next morning Julia awoke early. Isabella's observations recurred to her memory.

“ It is but too true,” she thought, sighing: “ I am indeed two hundred leagues from Frederick ! how shall I ever contrive to inform him where I am without exposing myself to Bridget's dreadful vengeance ? ”

Then, discarding these painful reflections, she cherished the flattering

hope of being united to him for ever. She instantly left her bed, for she longed to see Isabella, to repeat to her all she had said on the preceding evening, and communicate a crowd of new ideas that appeared to her of the highest importance.

Having reached the door of her friend's room, she distinguished the loud and angry voice of Bridget. Fearing her presence might offend the detestable woman, she sorrowfully returned to her room, determined to wait there for Isabella. After having opened the window to inhale the balsamic air of morning, she fixed her looks on a cascade, that rushing from the top of a mass of rocks, fell gently through some delicate shrubs, bending as it

passed their foliage. The day was dull and stormy—a stifling heat inflamed the atmosphere, and the summits of the Pyrenees, covered with opaque clouds, seemed confounded in the horizon. Flashes of lightning, rending this gloomy disk, spread a dark and reddish fire over the adjacent country, whilst the bursts of thunder, repeated by numberless echoes, were mingled with the plaintive and monotonous murmur of the water-fall. Julia, much alarmed, hastily closed the window, and went to the farther end of the room to avoid the lightning, which every moment became more vivid.”

She had remained nearly half an hour in the same spot, her head cover-

ed with her handkerchief, when Isabella entered the room.

“Bridget waits breakfast for you,” she said, “and is already displeased at not seeing you in the parlour.”

Julia accounted to her friend for being so late, by mentioning the circumstance that caused her to return to her room, and then expressed her uneasiness at the loud conversation of which she had only caught a few words.

“Alas!” replied Isabella, “every day, or rather every moment, I am exposed to these distressing scenes; you will know the cause of this last one when I can resume my narrative.”

They then joined Bridget. The unfeeling woman during breakfast appeared to enjoy the terror of poor Julia, who

trembled at each violent burst of thunder. At length the storm abated, but as the floods from the heavy rains had inundated the park, and precluded the possibility of walking, Isabella obtained permission to conduct her friend to the platform of one of the towers, on which was a little pavilion.

They placed themselves on a raised seat, which had once been covered with green velvet, but no remains of it could now be discovered except a few shreds scattered on the floor: the rest of the furniture presented the same spectacle of devastation and decay. Julia was enchanted with the prospect from the window of this building; her eyes wandered over the vast chain of mountains, whose summits, in some

places covered with snow, in others with the verdure of spring, formed a grand and sublime contrast, that astonishes the imagination, and, as it were, forces it to desert its magical abode, and render homage to the glorious and wonderful works of nature.

After contemplating for a few minutes this sublime picture, she sat down, and taking her friend's hand, entreated her to continue the promised recital.

“You will recollect,” said Isabella, “that I had retired to my room on leaving the park. Bridget's threats, the circumstance she had just communicated to me, and the extreme depression my last interview with Henry

had left on my spirits, all operating together made me really ill. I passed a dreadful night, and the next day I had so much fever that I was unable to leave my bed.

“Bridget, without shewing the slightest degree of feeling for my situation, tortured me with reproaches; and swore that if my life even was to be the sacrifice, I should still die the wife of Ximeo. I too well knew she was capable of adhering to her word, and I shuddered at the idea of the persecution to which I was to be the victim; but it was necessary to shelter myself from the storm, and for the first time in my life I determined to use dissimulation; do not despise me, Julia, when I own that I condescended to prevaricate.”

“ Dear aunt,’ I at length said, ‘ I beseech you not to treat me with so much harshness ; grant me some days in which to familiarize myself to the idea of this marriage. I feel no repugnance to Ximeo’s person, and I only ask to know him a little better before I give myself to him for ever.’

“ Bridget was agreeably surprised by this answer. Knowing the frankness and natural candour of my character, she did not for a moment doubt my veracity : she willingly promised the delay I solicited, and fixed that day fortnight for my definitive answer. On my leaving the room she desired me to be careful of my health, adding that as a reward for my submission to her will, she would grant me all the liber-

ty I could desire during the interval agreed on.

“ Left with no other companion than my reflections,” continued Isabella, “ my cruel situation, so peculiarly unprotected as I was, drew tears from my eyes, or rather my very heart wept. I wearied my imagination without finding any method of averting the misfortune that threatened me. At last it occurred to me that Henry only could rightly direct my conduct under the existing difficulty, and I most anxiously awaited the moment when I should see him. I had arranged to meet him at the hour when Bridget took her afternoon’s sleep. I dined with her as usual, notwithstanding my excessive weakness ; and the moment I saw her

seat herself in her arm-chair, and her eye-lids close, I went into the park.

“ Henry was already waiting near the aperture in the wall. An exclamation of terror escaped him on seeing my pale and dejected countenance. I entreated him in a low voice to be calm ; and, leaning on his arm, I tried to reach the place where we usually conversed ; but I had only proceeded a very few steps when I felt my knees tremble under me, and I was obliged to stop. Henry could no longer silently endure the anxiety and unhappiness he felt at my altered countenance : he overwhelmed me with questions, and entreated me instantly to inform him what had caused the dreadful change so apparent in my features.

“ My dear friend,” said I to him, ‘ I am not well, I cannot possibly go any farther ; let us remain where we are ; Bridget is in a sound sleep, and certainly will not look for us here.’ I then returned with him into the park, and we went into a bower, where I had raised a seat of green turf.

“ Henry, trembling, and scarcely breathing, never withdrew his eyes from me : he seemed waiting with the utmost anxiety for the explanation he had not the fortitude again to request.

“ When I had finished my painful recital, he for the first few minutes seemed overcome by the weight of his sorrow ; but soon giving way to the natural impetuosity of his character, he vented the most dreadful imprecations.

tions on Bridget, Ximeo, and on himself, for having been so weak as to rely on his mother's promise to protect me during his absence.

“ This is then what she intended me,” he exclaimed : ‘ she would bestow the most perfect work of nature on a peasant boy ! a vile plebeian ! My Isabella ! the beloved of my heart !—she who has for ever fixed the destiny of my future life ! she be the wife of Ximeo !—forbid it heaven ! No, no ! whilst this aching bosom throbs that shall never be.’

“ Dearest Henry,” I observed, ‘ it is not by vain exclamations we shall remedy the evil which threatens us. Be calm—recollect our time is too

precious to employ it solely in painful retrospections.'

"The sound of my voice made him start; he fixed on me a look full of affection; then falling at my feet, he exclaimed, 'Isabella! Isabella! my adored, own Isabella!' and melted into tears.

"Affected beyond all description, and no longer able to sustain the firmness with which I had endeavoured to arm myself, I clasped this beloved friend to my heart, laid my head on his bosom, and we for a long time mingled our tears without being able to articulate a single word.

"No! I cannot believe,' at length said Henry, 'that my mother until

now so good, so affectionate towards me, will plunge a dagger into my heart, by insisting on this unnatural marriage. I will see her, and kneel at her feet; she cannot resist my ardent prayer; she will protect her son's happiness. Bridget will have orders never more to speak to you of Ximeo, and I shall at last be blest with my Isabella !'

" But if you cannot soften your mother,' I said: ' if she still determines to accomplish a plan that will for ever save you from the dishonour she so much dreads, what then will become of us ?'

" ' Then,' cried Henry, with an accent that made me shudder; ' then let her tremble: despair will make me

venture any thing. Isabella,' he added, with a frightful affectation of calmness, 'remember, I again say, that so long as this heart, where thy image reigns, palpitates in this bosom, thou shall never be the wife of Ximeo.'

"He spent nearly two hours in this sort of conversation, sometimes sustained by hope, sometimes ^{de}~~ex~~pressed with fears. We exhausted every conjecture, and ended in convincing ourselves that the only way to parry the blow which threatened us was for Henry to take such steps with his mother as we had agreed upon: he was also to see his nurse, the mother of Ximeo. That good woman had always expressed the utmost affection for him; and we did not doubt but that when

Henry had ordered it she would find means to break off the intended union, if even Madame de Florange should persist in wishing it to be concluded.

“ Henry then told me it was likely he might not see me for three days, as this interval was necessary not only to give him time to make an appeal to his mother’s feelings, but also to lull the suspicions of his superior officers, who would remark his too frequent absences from the regiment. He however assured me that I should regularly hear from him, as he had already arranged with a messenger to bring his letters, and deposit them under a stone in the grotto, according to the plan we had formed on the preceding day.

“ It was necessary we should sepa-

rate. I accompanied my Henry as far as the wall; but, infatuated by the delight of each other's presence, we walked very slowly; every step we took seemed to deprive us of a part of that happiness we had for the last two hours enjoyed together.

“ Henry had already twenty times said, ‘ farewel, my beloved!’ I too had said farewel, without having the power to leave his arm. We remained motionless and in tears near the fatal aperture in the wall. He was repeating the vow to be mine, or die; when to my inexpressible terror I perceived Bridget at the end of the walk we were then in.

“ Adieu, Henry,” I said, pushing him away in agony. He left me, say-

ing, ‘ Heaven bless my Isabella !’ and, happily for him, without knowing the cause of my dreadful alarm ; for owing to his looks being fixed on me, he had not observed the approach of Bridget.

“ A mist seemed to spread itself before my eyes : I felt dizzy, and, leaning against a tree, tremblingly awaited the thunderbolt that I expected would nearly annihilate me.

“ Oh, my dear Julia !” continued Isabella, “ spare me the horror of recapitulating the shameful treatment and indignities I submitted to from the cruel Bridget. Her voice was so stifled with passion that she could only articulate confused sounds. She seized me so roughly by the arm that I felt

nearly senseless at her feet; then, dragging me with her, she made me cross the park with the rapidity of lightning. When we reached the hall, she ordered me, in a voice like thunder, to wait there until she returned. Alas! it would have been impossible to disobey her; for at the moment she left me I lost all consciousness of existence.

“ When I recovered the use of my senses, I found myself enveloped in a thick darkness—a cold and damp air circulated around me. I endeavoured to recal my mind, which seemed under the influence of a frightful dream: I tried to get up, but a convulsive shivering had seized all my limbs, and it was impossible for me to move from the place I occupied:

“ I remained in this situation more than an hour. My head began to wander strangely, owing to the burning fever that was consuming me ; and I probably should have once more lost all sense of my being, had not the presence of Bridget, whom I saw at my door, holding a lamp in her hand, revived my courage.

“ Where am I ? ’ I said, looking around me with terror. ‘ You are,’ replied the unfeeling woman, in a tone of irony, ‘ in a place where Henry will never come to visit you. Be silent,’ she added, supposing by my submissive and imploring gestures that I was going to attempt softening her ; ‘ I forbid you to speak ; the very sound of your voice is hateful to me :

is it thus, false and unworthy creature, you abuse my confidence? But here you shall expiate your crime: yes, I swear that you shall have time sufficient for repentance; therefore be prepared for a long, long penance.'

"Perhaps you will imagine, dear Julia, that overcome by this cruel woman's discourse I quietly submitted to her will, from inability to oppose it. If so, you will be surprised to hear that, whether owing to my fever, or the effect of despair, I felt, as I now think, supernatural energy. 'Monster!' I exclaimed, 'by what right do you presume to treat me thus? Am I then your slave? Do you not think the laws will some day punish your barbarity towards an unfortunate or-

phan whom fate has confided to your protection?’

“Hardly had I given utterance to these words, when my courage failed me, and I trembled at my own temerity: I leaned my head against the wall, and covered my face with both my hands. An awful silence had succeeded the sound of my voice: Bridget, motionless with surprise, could not articulate a single word. I at length ventured to look at her, and perceived in her countenance a mixture of uneasiness and passion. She placed the lamp and some food she had brought close to me; then turning away with a thoughtful air, she ascended the three steps from my dungeon, closed the door after her, and disappeared.

“ When alone, I reflected on the courage I had shewn in so boldly addressing Bridget in a language she was not prepared to expect from me.

“ Accustomed to a servile obedience, an unlimited submission, my tears had until now been the only weapons I had opposed to her harshness.

“ No matter,’ I cried, in a moment of despair ; ‘ if I die the victim to my boldness, I can never repent of having created a painful sensation in the breast of that barbarous woman. Having occasioned her hard heart to feel, remorse will avenge me for all the misery with which she has loaded me from the moment of my birth.’

“ I know not how I passed the remainder of the night : a painful pres-

sure on my heart, some vague and confused ideas made me conscious I still existed ; but the power of reflection was lost to me ; I enjoyed the favour nature grants to excessive misery ; I suffered, but could not analyze my sufferings ; it was a dreadful wound from which reason and wearisome conjectures had not yet raised the fast bandage.

“ After a refreshing sleep I began a little to recover the chain of my ideas. The fever that was consuming me had in some measure abated ; beams of light penetrated into my dungeon through a sort of air-hole guarded by iron bars, and mingled themselves with the rays emanating from the lamp Bridget had left with me. I arose

with tottering steps, and endeavoured to ascertain the extent of my prison, which I found was the dungeon intended for malefactors in the times when the Lords of the Castle (Feudal Barons) resided at Font Romeu. It was there they confined such of their vassals as were convicted of any heinous crime. I discovered my wretched habitation to be a square space of about fifty paces, around which were raised stone benches: massy chains covered with rust were in several places attached to the wall by iron rings, and the damp floor was overgrown with moss. I again seated myself on the same stone where I had past the night; my tears began to flow, and some drops fell on one of the heavy

chains against which I had reclined my aching head. It was then I gave myself up to all the bitterness of my recollections: my thoughts dwelt on Henry—the adored object of my soul's best affections: he could not know what was become of me, and I reflected on the misery he would suffer from his letters to me remaining unanswered.

“ I also wished to know if he had succeeded in conciliating his mother. ‘ Great and merciful god !’ I exclaimed in agony, ‘ what will become of me, immured as I am in this dungeon, without friends or protection!—abandoned by all nature!’ Scarcely had I uttered these words when I heard the groans of my poor Silvio. This faithful animal was on the outside of my

prison door, making every possible effort to get to me, by scratching with his paws to widen a little interstice I could plainly distinguish. He undoubtedly had remained in the same place during all the night; and the sound of my voice, leaving him no longer in doubt of my being there, had occasioned the exertions he was making to reach me. I arose, and seating myself close to the door, mingled my sobs with the plaintive lamentations of this really attached animal.

“Bridget again visited me at the dinner hour: she had scarcely half opened the door, when Silvio darted into the prison of his unfortunate mistress. He overwhelmed me with his caresses—indeed, his joy was so un-

bounded that I feared he would expire at my feet. Bridget would have severely suffered for her attempt to drive him away, had I not restrained the fury of my faithful companion, and now only friend.

“ Oh leave me,” said I to her, “ in pity leave me the only being who is interested in my fate : do not deprive me of this one consolation.”

“ Bridget dared not remove him ; and after ordering me to make use of the food she had brought she went away, without deigning to answer a single word to my questions relative to the period of my captivity.

“ I will spare you the particulars, my dear Julia, of my sufferings during this cruel imprisonment—four days of

unvaried misery passed without Bridget's shewing the least inclination to restore me to liberty. On the morning of the fifth, at a time of the day at which that unfeeling woman was not accustomed to torment me with her presence, I heard the door of the dungeon open; but totally absorbed in my own sorrowful meditations, I did not even look round, until an exclamation of pity and surprise caught my ear. I raised my eyes, and saw Madame de Florange standing near me, and examining me with the tenderest compassion.

“ I uttered a shriek, and kneeling, pressed the mother of my Henry to my heart. I forgot all her injustice, and the hardships I had endured : I

at that moment recollected nothing but that my beloved owed his existence to the respectable being before me, and I worshipped her as a deity. Soon a mixture of resentment for what she had caused me to suffer, and dread of what I might still have to endure, banished this first burst of affection, and my arms no longer strained her to my bosom: my eyes were fixed on the floor, and I remained in the attitude of humble resignation.

“ Rise, Isabella,” said Madame de Florange, a good deal affected; “ you are certainly very blameable, but nothing can excuse the barbarity with which you have, wholly without my knowledge, been treated. I will not add to your sufferings by reproaching

you with your ingratitude towards me : your own reflections will punish you.'

" On ending these words, she offered me her hand, which I took in silence, and we left the subterraneous prison, without my having the power to articulate one word.

" The open air and the splendour of day-light gave me an indescribable shock : my eyes closed—my knees bent ; and I should have fallen to the ground, had not Madame de Florange supported me in her arms. In a few minutes I was by her care sufficiently recovered to reach the parlour where Bridget was sitting. They placed me in a chair, and after a short silence, Madame de Florange, giving Bridget an expressive look, said—' I suppose

I may implicitly rely on your promise?’

“ You shall be obeyed, Madam,” she answered, ‘ and I beg you to be assured that my zeal for the honour of your respectable family alone induced me to resort to such strong measures.’

“ Come here, Isabella,” said Madame de Florange to me; ‘ Come here and kiss your aunt. She is willing at my intercession to pardon you. I also forgive you; and I shall have formed a very erroneous opinion of the generosity of your character, if such liberality and kindness do not produce a better and more permanent effect than the severe punishments that have recently been inflicted on you.’

“ Tears were my only reply. Ma-

dame de Florange drew her chair close to mine, soothed me with kind expressions, and did not leave me until she had seen me take all the proper nourishment I so greatly stood in need of.

“ In a few days,” said she, “ I shall again call here, and I hope during the interval Miss Bridget will, as she has promised me, be very careful of your health and spirits.”

“ Bridget bowed respectfully. I was so much absorbed in grief, that I could only take one of Madame de Florange’s hands, press it to my lips, and almost stifled by the violence of my sensations, stammer out some expressions of gratitude. This excellent woman departed, leaving me, if possible, still more unhappy than I was before she visited my

wretched prison! Her generosity and affection loaded me with remorse. I could only entitle myself to her confidence by relinquishing Henry; and the mere idea of such a sacrifice upset my reason, and occasioned such inexpressible agony to my heart, as rendered it too large for my bosom! I spent all the day in my own room, struggling against the imperious sentiment that was become a part of my existence, but without being able to create in my mind the slightest wish or intention to submit to Madame de Florange's orders.

“ My sufferings, or rather, perhaps, the little value I attached to life, rendered me desperate, and in the evening I went into the park, determined to see my Henry; or, at any rate, to fetch the

letters that must have been left for me in the grotto.

“ In proportion as I drew nearer to the appointed place, my soul became more calm; for the turbulent shock, produced by indecision, having given place to a fixed determination, I experienced that transitory relief which is but the absence of unpleasant sensations, and not the return of reason.

“ When I got to the wall, I found the aperture had been closed up with bundles of thorns: but this first obstacle, so far from making me despond, re-animating my courage. I was trying to pass through the barrier at the risk of leaving about my person evidence enough to betray me to Bridget, when Silvio, with a cry of joy, slipped through

a space where the thorns could not injure him, and instantly disappeared, as he had once before done. I stopped a moment, to consider how I ought to act; but before I had determined, I saw Silvio close to me holding a ball of paper in his mouth. Almost certain that Henry was at the grotto, yet very uneasy at his not accompanying the dog, I with a trembling hand took the paper, and read the following words:

“Are you alone, Isabella? May I venture to come into the park? Alas! for the last two days my torture has been almost too great! I have seen the barrier recently placed between us. Three letters of mine still remain in the grotto. Why have you not endeavoured to get them? Oh, my Isa-

bella ! my sweet companion ! my beloved wife ! the anxiety I suffer impels me to take a (perhaps) very imprudent step—but I can no longer endure this dreadful suspense, and I confide this note to our faithful Silvio. One word I entreat you in answer. I hope—I expect—but I am chilled with fear.’

“ I wrote at the bottom of his note, with a pencil, ‘ Come, and I will explain all.’

“ I threw the paper to Silvio ; the dear animal took it with a sagacity that astonished and delighted me. It really seemed as if he was aware of my wishes, for he was soon out of sight.

“ In a few minutes I once again saw Henry ! I heard his beloved voice ;

was pressed to his affectionate bosom ; and all my sufferings were forgotten.

“ Alas ! the barrier that separated us was but a too faithful emblem of our fate ! What numberless thorns are we not doomed to meet with in our progress through life, before we shall be united for ever ! United for ever ! ” Isabella repeated, in a low voice—then sighing deeply, she added—“ Dear Julia, can it be true—can it be possible that I shall ever be so supremely blest ? ”

“ Do not doubt it,” exclaimed Julia with vivacity—“ Recollect all the plans we have formed. We must be happy : at least I hope so, Isabella ! ” she added with less energy.

Isabella sighed, and looked at her

friend as if to say, “ I am less sanguine than you are ;” and then continued her narrative.

“ I was careful,” she said, “ to conceal from Henry the cruel treatment I had endured. His feeling heart would have suffered such agony as I at the risk of my existence would have spared it. I therefore merely told him, that Bridget, having discovered our last meeting, had confined me for four days to my room. I also informed him of Madame de Florange’s visit, and of her goodness to me.

“ Ah ! that is so like my dear mother,” exclaimed Henry ; ‘ her heart is all kindness I know—yet she is inexorable to the prayers of her wretched son .’

“ Dearest Henry !’ I replied in a trembling voice, ‘ is there then no hope ? Must Ximeo—’

“ Ximeo !’ he said in anger, interrupting me : ‘ no, no ; that man shall never possess my Isabella. I have seen and spoken to him. His mother has promised me—’ Henry endeavoured to tranquillize his sensations, and at length informed me, that not having been able to soften his mother, he had consulted only his despair, and had flown to Ximeo. ‘ The success of this second negotiation,’ he added, ‘ has far exceeded my hopes. I, on the first opening of the subject, found my nurse so much dazzled by the advantages likely to result to her son from the intended marriage, that I had some trou-

ble to induce her to sacrifice her ambition to her affection for me. However, my tears, my entreaties, and the magnificent promises I made her, together with the anger and revenge I threatened her with, in the event of her refusing to comply with my wishes, at length produced the desired effect ; and I have her word, that she will break off the detestable marriage, although she must, at the same time, be careful not to incur my mother's displeasure. But, dear Isabella,' said Henry, taking my hand, ' what gives me still more confidence in the success of my plan is, that Ximeo is entirely devoted to our views. After speaking of you with the respect due from him to the chosen partner of my life, the

wife of my bosom, he owned his affections were engaged to a young peasant girl named Agnes, poor as himself, who lives with her parents in a cottage not far from his father's residence. 'My mother is like your's, Sir, if you will forgive me for daring to make such a comparison,' Ximeo added, his eyes filling with tears; 'she refuses to unite me to the girl I love, because we are both poor; but are we not both of us young, and strong too, Sir; and will not our labour provide us the means of existence?'

"I encouraged Ximeo," continued Henry; "I praised his constancy, and spoke with admiration of Agnes's beauty, although I declare I scarcely recollect her features. I also promised

to use all my influence with his mother, to induce her to consent to his union with his mistress : in short, I left Ximeo, and the good old Bertha, perfectly satisfied with them both. The latter promised me to interest her husband in my favour, which she assured me would not be difficult ; but we agreed upon the absolute necessity of using a little dissimulation towards my mother, and still more with Bridget. Thus, my dear Isabella, when the fortnight they have allowed you is expired you must obtain from my mother a further delay of some months ; during which interval Heaven will point out some way of our sheltering ourselves from the impending storm."

" Oh what good, dear people !" said

Julia, interrupting her friend ; “ how I love Ximeo and his mother ! Isabella, we must take them with us. I will speak to Frederick about them. He shall unite Agnes to her lover.”

Isabella smiled at Julia’s ardour ; but her lovely countenance resuming its habitual melancholy, she said—
“ Henry remained some time longer with me, during which we endeavoured to arrange a plan for meeting without danger.

“ After attentively examining every part of the wall, near the thorny barrier placed by Bridget’s care, and which it was impossible to pass over, we found another place, where the stones were so loose they could be removed by the slightest effort ; and the

thick moss with which they were covered offered the facility of replacing them, without their removal being perceptible.

“ Delighted at this discovery, we blessed Heaven, and resolved that in future I should go to the grotto by this new way, always using the precaution to immediately replace the stones as soon as I had passed through, whether in leaving or returning to the park.

“ Henry then left me, and I remained for some minutes motionless on the spot where I stood, with my eyes rivetted on the road he had taken, vainly trying to discover the traces of my friend's footsteps in the sand, and mentally imploring the Almighty to bless and protect the being I loved far more dearly

than my own existence. A sweet meditation succeeded my sorrow. My soul became calm ; and I gave myself up to such pleasurable sensations as I had long been a stranger to ; but Fate, ever envious of the slightest consolation enjoyed by its victims, brought Bridget to the spot where I stood.

“ Do you not think,” she said, ironically, ‘ these thorns have a very pretty effect ? It gives me extreme pleasure to point out to your observation this clump of briars and thistles lately placed here. I know you are a great admirer of natural productions, especially when, as in the present instance, beauty and utility are blended.’

“ The sound of that voice, which had so frequently uttered threats and

imprecations against me, made me tremble ; and when I compared it to the gentle accents of my Henry, a cold chill ran through my veins, and a deep sigh escaped from my bosom.

“ Will you try to pass through the aperture, young lady,’ said Bridget ; ‘ I wish you would have the goodness to examine my work a little nearer, and give me your opinion of my performance.’

“ On saying this, she pushed me with so much violence, that I fell among the thorns. The pain from the scratches on my face and arms was so great, that I could not restrain my tears. Bridget was greatly alarmed when she saw my dress stained with blood. She supported me in her arms,

and even condescended to apologize for what (she said) was intended merely as a joke; but I clearly perceived the fear of displeasing Madame de Flo-range occasioned her affectation of humanity.

“ Never do me any more serious injury,” I answered, “ and I will from my heart forgive you this.”

“ I shall pass over in silence, my dear Julia, the particular incidents of my wretched life from that period until the time when I was to give my definitive answer to Bridget. I will only tell you, that during the interval I several times saw Henry, and that we had the good fortune, by using the precautions I have already mentioned,

to meet unobserved by the Argus who guarded me.

“At length the fatal day arrived. Although I armed myself with all the courage I could collect, yet I awaited in trembling the result of the attack I knew I had to sustain from Bridget. But judge of the surprise that succeeded my grief and anxiety, when the so long dreaded period passed over without her once adverting to the hateful subject. Two more days elapsed, and still no attempt was made by Bridget to lead the conversation towards Ximeo or my future establishment. On the fourth morning I was alone in my room, reflecting, as was habitual to me, on my peculiarly unhappy situa-

tion, when I heard my door gently opened, and Madame de Florange introduced herself. The expression of sensibility and goodness depicted on her countenance, the endearing manner in which she condescended to address me, affected me even to tears. I threw myself at her feet, notwithstanding her efforts to prevent me ; and leaning my head on one of her arms, I could only weep in silence.

“ My child ! my sweet Isabella,” she said, with that tone of real feeling so easily distinguished from affectation, ‘ why this grief ? These tears distress me ! Are you not with your friend, who, in every event and circumstance of your life, will give you proofs of the sincerity of her attachment ? ’

“ I could not articulate a syllable.

“ You know—you are doubtless aware,’ she added with hesitation, ‘ of the motive of my present visit ?’

“ Oh, Madam !’ I exclaimed, ‘ I cannot—Indeed I never can—Henry ! my dear, dear Henry—’ I could add no more, and concealed my burning head in the bosom of Henry’s mother.

“ Isabella,’ she replied, gently repulsing me, ‘ do not force me to arm myself with a severity very foreign indeed from my disposition and character ; but which, if necessary, I must use to oppose this most absurd predilection. The young man you have just named shall never be your husband. I here swear it by—’

“ Terrified at the idea of the oath

she was about to utter, I interrupted her by saying, ‘Dearest Madam! do not suppose I have ever ventured—that I have ever flattered myself—Ah, no! Alas! I too well know the distance at which fate has placed me from your son; but why insist on my marrying Ximeo? In mercy, Madam, let me live in peace! Why must I be rendered completely wretched? Is not my situation already a sufficiently lamentable one? Can it be necessary, or right, to sacrifice an unfortunate orphan, who on her knees implores your pity and protection?’

“Madame de Florange remained some minutes silent, then looking at me, as if she wished to scrutinize my very soul, she said, ‘Isabella, I know

the natural veracity and candour of your character; promise me to relinquish all idea of Henry—say you will never again see him; and I will, in return, pledge my word that you shall remain the uncontrouled mistress of your own fate.’

“Never; no, never!” I exclaimed with energy: ‘all the treasures of the universe, every torture that could be inflicted, should never extort from me such blasphemy!’

“Then,” replied Madame De Florange, coldly, ‘prepare yourself to become the wife of Ximeo. From this hour I resign you to Bridget.’

“She arose and walked towards the door. I followed, and taking hold of her dress, said, ‘By your hopes of

future mercy, I entreat you, Madam, not to abandon me to the rage and resentment of that unfeeling woman: be less cruel, and order her speedily to terminate an existence now a burthen to me. Your end, then, Madam, will be answered; for when the unfortunate Isabella is no more, then you will have no fear of Henry degrading himself.'

"Madame de Florange, moved by the excess of my affliction, came to me, and endeavoured to calm my agitation. I listened with affectionate respect, whilst she spoke of her friendship and kind intentions towards me; but every time Ximeo's name escaped from her lips, the same delirious violence returned, and I earnestly im-

plored her to order Bridget to deprive me of life.

“ Most of the morning was thus spent. Madame de Florange, alternately kind, severe, affectionate, and unfeeling, she exhausted every possible argument, in the hope of obtaining from me a promise to forget Henry ; at length, perceiving it impossible to influence me, she was a second time going to withdraw, when I, suddenly recollecting the advice Henry had given me, took her hand, and in a trembling voice said :—

“ If a little time was given me, in which to familiarize myself to this hateful marriage, perhaps then—’ I dared not finish ; my face and neck were suffused with crimson, and I

mentally reproached myself with dissimulation, which Henry's mother had early taught me to hold in abhorrence, as leading to every species of vice and dishonour.

“ Perhaps then——” Madame de Florange hastily repeated; ‘ finish the sentence, my dear girl. Do you in that case promise to submit to my wishes?’

“ Madam,” I replied, without venturing to look at her, ‘ I will certainly do all that depends on me to ——’ I wished to add obey you, but the words expired on my lips.

“ Well, well,” said Madame de Florange, ‘ I will leave a great deal to your own heart, which I know the value of. Gratitude will impel you to

make some sacrifices, and therefore I will allow you to say what time you expect, and I will use my influence with Bridget to obtain her consent to the delay.'

"I wish for three months,' I said, in a voice hardly distinct.

"Madame Florange at first objected to so long a period, but finally acceded to it. After leaving me, she remained in conversation with Bridget nearly an hour.

"In short," added Isabella, "to abridge this already too tedious recital, I will merely tell you, my dear Julia, that I passed part of the winter in a way not unpleasant to me: I frequently saw Henry, and during the intervals of his absence, when his duty

detained him with his regiment, I received his dear kind letters.

“ Two months after my last conversation with Madame de Florange I learnt that an uncle of Ximeo’s had lately died in Spain, leaving his nephew sole heir to his property, and that he was gone there to arrange the business of inheritance. Henry, who told me this, added that he had requested Ximeo to remain absent until the Spring, in order to procrastinate the period of my torment, which he had no doubt would be resumed immediately on the young man’s return from Spain. Ximeo more readily promised to oblige him, because this acquisition of fortune enabled him to

marry poor Agnes, whom he tenderly loved.

“ And now, Julia, I approach the most painful period of my ever miserable life,” said Isabella, sighing; “ the moment when Henry left me, and took with him the dearest and most valuable part of my being. A fortnight after Ximeo’s departure, the regiment received orders to advance towards the North of France, and Valenciennes was the town fixed on as the garrison where all the troops destined to march into Germany were to assemble.

“ My unhappy Henry could not personally dry away the agonising tears caused by this afflicting intelligence.

A few lines traced by his beloved hand informed me that he had left Lourdes on that very evening. Here they are," said Isabella, drawing a paper from her bosom. "They will remain here," she added, placing her hand on her heart, "until I again see Henry; and if fate has decreed that we are never more to meet in this world, they will accompany me to the grave."

Julia took the paper, and hastily ran over its contents, whilst Isabella's eyes, full of tears, were fixed on the letters traced by the hand of him she adored.

"Oh! how infinitely you are loved!" exclaimed Julia; "I would give the world to receive so kind and feeling a letter from De Montmorency."

“ From that day,” continued Isabella, “ I have dragged on my miserable existence in sorrow and in tears. Henry, on leaving Lourdes, arranged with a person of that town, on whom he could depend, punctually to convey his letters to me ; but when the campaign opened, and war, dreadful war, devastated all nature, his letters, my only consolation, became less frequent. I received one about ten days ago, in which Henry tells me the friend in whom he confided, being obliged to go to Paris, they would in future be addressed to Ximeo’s father, to whom he had written on the subject. In consequence of this new plan, he begged me to obtain Bridget’s permission to pass a few days at his nurse’s cottage, in order to arrange with her husband

as to the best mode of conveying them to me ; but the good Bertha spared me the pain of soliciting this favour of the woman I hate, by calling herself at the castle, and she very easily prevailed on Bridget to accede to our wishes.

“ Although Ximeo has been more than two months returned from Spain, yet he has acted with so much good sense, and has given such plausible reasons for delay, that even Madame de Florange could not be displeased at the multiplied obstacles he has created to procrastinate his union with me.

“ Bridget was highly pleased at Bertha’s request, imagining the invitation was given in order the better to associate my pretended lover and myself, and thus by degrees familiarise

me to the idea of a marriage, which she had not failed to observe my constant and invincible repugnance to.

“I spent two days with Bertha, and it was in the vicinity of her cottage, my dear Julia, that I had the happiness to meet you.

“Ximeo and his father assured me of their zeal and fidelity; the latter promised to convey Henry’s letter himself to the grotto. I left these worthy people, equally gratified by their obliging reception and respectful conduct during my visit. Since my return here, Bridget’s persecutions have recommenced, which are the more alarming, as Madame de Florange left this for Paris a week ago, where she is gone to arrange some family affairs, and I am again left to the mercy of this shocking woman.

who peremptorily insists on my fixing a day for my union with Ximeo ; and it is my refusal that occasions the painful scenes which you have more than once witnessed."

Julia listened with the utmost interest and sensibility to Isabella's recital, and for many minutes after the unfortunate girl had finished speaking she remained silent.

The circumstantial knowledge she had just acquired of Bridget's character darkened the brilliant picture her imagination had the day before delineated with so much satisfaction ; and the prospect of happiness now appeared so very remote as to be almost inaccessible.

They spent the remainder of the

morning in the pavilion. Interrupted sentences and monosyllables at length broke the chain of ideas that seemed to occupy both their minds. Julia appeared agitated and uneasy, whilst the expressive countenance of the sensitive Isabella shewed her soul intent on some painful retrospections.

“It is then as I feared; and I am lost!” exclaimed Julia: “nothing but the Almighty’s interference can restore me to——” she was about to add—my friends: but suddenly recollecting that no fellow-being, save only one, was interested even in the continuance of her existence; that she never remembered having been pressed to the bosom of a doating parent, or greeted by the endearing appellation of child, or

sister ; her heart swelled, and changing her expression, she added, “ to the invaluable blessing of liberty.”

Isabella attempted, but in vain, to comfort her friend ; but the idea of the dreadful dungeon in which she should be confined if she made an unsuccessful attempt to escape, chilled her with horror. Her features a moment afterwards assumed an expression of peace, and with that confidence in her creator, which is ever the result of early principles of religion and virtue, she exclaimed, looking affectionately at Isabella :—

“ God is omnipotent ! he can release us from this prison, and make us both happy.”

By degrees the minds of these nearly

equally unfortunate girls became more calm, and after exhausting every conjecture and probability, they resolved that in Isabella's next letter to Henry she should enclose a short note from Julia to De Montmorency, requesting him to convey it to the latter at Touraine with all possible speed. This plan was safe, though not expeditious, for on calculating the immense distance of the parties, they ascertained that an answer could not reach them in less than two months.

“ Perhaps,” said Isabella, “ during that period we may have the good fortune to get another letter sent to your friend by means of Ximeo, who will forward it by the post; but of this I dare scarcely flatter myself, for

whenever the young man visits the castle, Bridget's troublesome curiosity, and suspicious disposition, always impels her to watch our discourse, and even our movements."

"No, my dear Isabella, no," said Julia alarmed, "we must not employ that method. What would become of us, if Bridget discovered our intention? Indeed, it is much wiser to wait patiently." The last word was accompanied by a sigh. "I wish to owe my liberty to you, dear Henry."

A slight smile glanced over Isabella's lips; she pressed Julia's hand, and placing it on her heart, repeated with infinite sweetness: "Yes, we will owe our liberty to my Henry."

They now employed themselves in

arranging a system for their conduct towards Bridget. Julia listened to Isabella's advice, and promised implicitly to follow it. The care with which she fulfilled this promise had so happy an effect, that Bridget soon felt for her all the interest her nature was susceptible of; that is, she did not seek for opportunities of tormenting her; nay, she would sometimes be pleased at this sweet girl's attempts to amuse her; and Julia always took care to be most amiable and chearful on those days when Isabella went for Henry's letters to the grotto: on those occasions she always remained with Bridget, attentively anticipated her every wish, and employed all her address to prevent her from directing her footsteps towards

the opening in the old wall. The grateful Isabella most sincerely repaid those marks of friendship; next to Henry, Julia was the being she most dearly loved: she expressed her affection with that exquisite sensibility, the bloom of which had not been sullied by an intercourse with the great world. She day after day listened with equal interest to her friend, when the latter conversed of De Montmorency, and shared her regret and grief at being so distant from him.

During all this, Frederic de Montmorency, who possessed the tenderest and exclusive affections of a most lovely young woman, was very far indeed from imagining himself so fortunate.

Yielding alternately to hope, fear,

jealous anxiety, and rage, he spent his life in cursing Rosinval, and in accusing, pitying, and adoring Julia. Three months had elapsed since the event he so bitterly deplored, but time, that never failing remedy for slight diseases of the heart, seemed to add new strength to his afflictions.

The autumn was now far advanced : the majestic plane trees in the park no longer exhibited those magnificent domes through which the sun beams could scarcely penetrate : the yellow leaves on the slightest breath of zephyr quitted the proud branches of which they had heretofore constituted the most beautiful ornament, and dying, fell on that same earth, until now protected by their delightful shade.

De Montmorency, pensive and soli-

tary, wandered over the walks his Julia had embellished with her presence. He remained for hours in the Chinese Temple, reclining on the same green turf seat where he had first heard the sweet confession of regard from the woman he adored. Tears would frequently collect in his eyes, but were suddenly dashed away when he recollected Rosinval; and anger, imprecations, and schemes of revenge, succeeded the sighs of love.

The Countess de Montmorency with difficulty concealed her uneasiness at the frightful ravages that grief had made on her son's health. She saw him the victim to his attachment for Julia, but ambition silenced her maternal affection, and she as strongly as

ever adhered to her intention of forming an alliance with the De Seligny family. The perspective of the four millions of livres that Louisa would at some future day possess appeared to her so alluring, that she felt no hesitation in sacrificing her son to such equally brilliant and solid advantages; were he even, during the remainder of his life, fated to misery, from the loss of that happiness which she considered merely as the dream of a delirious imagination.

Madame de Seligny's wishes had until now been in unison with those of the Countess; but De Montmorency's unvarying repugnance to her daughter, together with the little advantage she had obtained from Julia's absence,

so irritated and vexed her, that she resolved to break off an engagement from which she could expect so little satisfaction; and in consequence of this determination she in her next conversation with the countess formally relinquished all idea of uniting the two families.

“I venture to assert, madam,” she added ironically, “that Louisa will not be a ^{loser}~~lover~~ by this rupture, for the fortune she at present possesses, and her still more splendid expectations, will entitle her to select a husband from amongst the most distinguished of our young nobility; and as your son persists in disdaining the advantages offered him, I trust you will not

think me incorrect in arranging another alliance for my daughter."

The countess seemed struck as if by a thunderbolt at this conversation. Her pride prompted her, but in vain, to receive this formal speech with becoming dignity: but ambition, that insatiable passion, soon revolted at the idea of quietly submitting to the loss of a fortune which would command so many advantages, and therefore placing on her countenance the mask of sorrow, she spoke with so much assumed feeling of her infinite regret, the loss her son would sustain, her admiration for, and attachment to Louisa, and the happiness she should derive from calling her daughter, that the highly

gratified and flattered Madame de Seligny became as anxious as herself to protract her decision for a few months; and they agreed to try whether the dissipated life of Paris would effect any change in De Montmorency's sentiments, and if so, they determined to take advantage of the first favourable moment to conclude the wished for union.

A few days previous to the period fixed upon for their departure, Madame de Seligny suggested to the countess a plan for destroying the innocent Julia's influence over the heart of her lover.

She had learnt that Rosinval was in Swisserland, where he intended to pass the winter.

“Your son,” she said, “is not ac-

quainted with Julia's hand-writing. I have formed a letter in which my niece herself announces to me her marriage with Rosinval : let us communicate its contents to the young count, or rather let us hand him Julia's self-condemnation ; and I have no doubt but that when he has relinquished all hope of being united to the insignificant girl, he will consent to realise our wishes."

" Your idea is excellent," exclaimed the countess ; " give me the letter, I will instantly take it to my son."

She then took the paper, and flew to De Montmorency's apartment. The young man was seated near a table, his head resting on one of his hands, and seemed absorbed in his own contempla-

tions : his face was pale, his lips discoloured, and large tear-drops rolled slowly over his cheeks.

The countess was for a moment affected by his altered and melancholy appearance : she silently approached her son, and with something like feeling, took his hand ; but instantly blushing at what she deemed a weakness, she let it drop, and with her usual austerity of manner, said :—

“ I do not now come, sir, to reproach you with the disgraceful attachment which has rendered you insensible to all the real and permanent advantages of life. The despicable being to whom you have given your heart will explain for herself. Madame de Seligny has just now received this letter from

her niece ; read it, and then say whether the wife of Rosinval is entitled to the Count de Montmorency's affection."

"The wife of Rosinval !" he exclaimed, taking the letter in his trembling hand. He wildly ran over a few lines, gave a heart-rending shriek, and for a few seconds seemed as if petrified ; then suddenly starting up from his seat, he gave himself up to such violent fits of fury as made the countess shudder.

"He shall perish !" he incessantly repeated ; "the monster shall perish by my hand ! he shall not live to be my Julia's husband ! I will instantly depart for Swisserland, madam," he added, impetuously, on perceiving his mother's endeavours to prevent his

leaving the room “ either allow me to go, or dread the effects of my despair.”

“ Well, go then, Frederic,” said the artful countess; “ go, carry death into Rosinval’s bosom, and then recompense his widow by the gift of a hand she has so well merited.”

“ His widow !” said De Montmorency, nearly overcome by his sensations. “ Oh, Julia ! Julia !” Sobs stifled his voice ; he threw himself into a chair : a livid paleness overspread his face, and he seemed dying.

The countess, beyond expression alarmed, tore down the bell-strings by the violence of her ringing, and filled the air with her screams. Her terror and agony were so excessive, that when the servants came into the room, she

wrung her hands, and repeatedly said :
“ It is I, wretch that I am ; it is I
who have killed my child.”

De Montmorency was carried to bed :
a burning fever, accompanied by a
constant delirium, soon brought him to
the brink of the grave. Alarm and
dismay became general at the castle :
the servants were sent in all directions
for medical assistance. Physicians
soon arrived, as did also the baron, to
whom intelligence had been sent of his
nephew's dangerous situation. The
countess remained by her son's bed,
her eyes fixed, the wildness of despair
imprinted on her features : she could
only utter broken sentences, which were
scarcely coherent. When she saw the
baron, she again exclaimed with an ac-
cent of horror :—

“ It is I who have killed my son ! ”

“ God, of his infinite mercy forbid ! ”
replied the baron much affected :—
“ my dear De Montmorency, my own
boy—Frederic,” he added with tears
in his eyes :—“ what, do you not know
me ? not know your friend, your
poor old uncle who loves you so dearly ?
Alas ! he does not answer.. I shall sink
under this misery. In pity, madam,
explain to me the incomprehensible
event that has plunged him into this
dreadful state ! ”

“ Julia has married Rosinval,”
murmured De Montmorency, who in
his delirium incessantly repeated those
words with inexpressible agitation.

“ No, my boy ! no,” cried the wor-
thy baron, “ that is not true, and who-

ever told you so is an abominable liar :—here, here is a letter I this morning received from one of my friends, who is at this moment in Swisserland. He tells me Rosinval is going to marry the daughter of a burgomaster of Schiaffoure, very rich, but neither young nor lovely. Judge therefore if this picture resembles your Julia.—Hear what he says,” continued the good old man, taking the letter in one hand and his spectacles in the other.

“ Sir,” said the physician, interrupting him, “ do you not perceive that this unfortunate young man is not in a state to understand you : in mercy withdraw : the noise made here may occasion the most fatal results, and I must insist on every person leaving the

room except myself and the nurse, who is to attend the invalid."

"By the holy angels, Mr. Esculapias," exclaimed the baron in a rage; "you are a downright fool, or rather you must be mad to say I shall injure my nephew's health. Why the contents of this bit of paper will cure him a hundred times sooner, and better than all the diabolical drugs I see ranged in battle array on the chimney-piece. Go, and tell your gossip stories to old women; as to me, I have no faith in your doctrines, and I shall without your permission do just as I think proper."

A most violent crisis at this moment afflicted the invalid, and put a period to the baron's vehemence.

“ Let us go, brother,” said the countess, “ let us go ; I can no longer sustain this heart-rending spectacle.”

The baron at first resisted her entreaties, but grief superseding his anger, he quietly allowed himself to be conducted out of the room.

He accompanied the countess in silence to her dressing-room, and as soon as they were both seated, he said :—

“ Tell me at once, madam, tell me the truth :—do you think my boy will die ? Are you sure,” he added, manly tears passing over his furrowed cheeks, “ are you sure he cannot live ?”

“ Almighty God !” exclaimed the countess, in a deep but scarcely audible voice, and dropping on her knees,

“ spare me this dreadful stroke of thy eternal justice ! the crime I committed merits thy anger ! punish me according to thy divine will ; but oh ! merciful Father, preserve the life of my innocent child ! ”

The baron shuddered at the word *crime*, which his sister-in-law had just uttered. He looked at her with equal terror and surprise ; he dreaded, yet wished to interrogate her relative to the extraordinary expression just escaped from her lips. He resolved to speak to her on the subject, and was beginning his question, when the countess, who no doubt perceived his intention, gave a frightful scream, and covering her face with both her hands, instantly flew into her bed-chamber and fastened the door.

Full of grief and sorrowful conjectures, the baron went into the drawing-room, where he found Madame de Seligny, her husband, and daughter, making preparations for their journey to Paris. The lady appeared greatly agitated: she addressed to the baron some common-place conversation, requested him to convey her compliments to the countess, together with her best wishes to the invalid, and a few minutes afterwards, accompanied by her family, got into the same carriage which a few months before had brought them with far different intentions and sensations to the Chateau de la Garde.

The unfortunate Frederic de Montmorency was in imminent danger the greater part of the night; and no

word of hope escaped the lips of the medical attendants until eight o'clock the following morning; when his youth, and the unremitting attention paid to every turn of his disease, enabled him to combat with and conquer the frightful convulsions that at each fit threatened to terminate his existence. Excessive debility succeeded the dreadful crisis, and at length the physicians pronounced his recovery possible, provided the strictest quietness was observed, as the slightest agitation might occasion a relapse of the paroxysms.

The countess never left her son's bedside, except to retire to her own room. She spoke to no one; even her favourite waiting woman was not

allowed to perform her usual duties. Thus abstracted from all the family, it was impossible for the baron to have any conversation with her. He spent all his time in his nephew's room, enjoying the delight of seeing him restored to life; and although he infinitely wished once more to speak of the letter from Schaffoure, which he still persisted would have a miraculous effect on the invalid's health and spirits, yet he dared not interfere, unless sanctioned by the approbation of the physician, for whom he had conceived the highest respect and veneration, from the moment he perceived the beneficial effects of those drugs he had so greatly despised.

On the third morning after his ar-

rival, as he was sitting close to his nephew's bed, who was enjoying a sweet sleep, a servant opened the door, and made a signal for him to leave the room.

Alarm and consternation were depicted in the man's face: the baron hastened to him, and inquired the cause of his strange appearance. The servant, without replying, withdrew a few steps from the door, and leaning close to the baron's ear, said in a low voice:—

“ It grieves me, sir, to be obliged to tell you that the countess is in an apoplectic fit; the physician is now with her, but Miss Christine, my lady's first waiting woman, told me they believe her to be dead.”

“Dead !” repeated the baron, struck with horror ; and immediately hastened to the countess’s apartment.

Pale, motionless, and disfigured, Madame de Montmorency was seated in an arm chair, and, as the man had said, shewed no symptom whatever of existence. Her women were endeavouring to restore suspended animation, by making her respire volatile salts ; while the physician, seated by her, and holding one of her cold hands in both of his, appeared to be watching on her countenance the effect of the remedies he had already administered.

“Is there no hope ?” exclaimed the baron.

“I can say nothing yet, sir,” replied the physician, gravely ; “we have in

this case a complication of diseases which requires all my attention.”

The baron threw himself into a chair, and with infinite anxiety awaited the doctor's opinion.

After remaining nearly three quarters of an hour in an almost torpid state, the countess feebly raised one of her hands, then deeply sighing, she opened her eyes and stared wildly around her. She evidently wished to speak, but only some confused and badly articulated words escaped her trembling lips.

The baron approached, and expressed his happiness at seeing her restored to life. The countess shook her head, and her eyes filled with tears. She

again made an imperfect effort to speak, from which they collected that she desired to see her confessor and a notary.

Their not instantly attending to her wish on this subject seemed greatly indeed to distress her, as her agitation infinitely increased until she could make herself fully understood; when of course they were both immediately sent for.

During the absence of the messenger, she recovered the power of speech; but the physician did not conceal from the baron his apprehensions of her speedy dissolution.

"I am rejoiced," he added, "at her ladyship's determination to see without

any delay those persons who will execute her last wishes, for I much fear to-morrow would be too late."

"Is it possible!" said the baron, his eyes overflowing with tears: "unhappy woman! at this awful moment I wish to bury in everlasting oblivion all my causes of displeasure, and most sincerely deplore her thus descending to the grave in the very summer of her days."

In as short a period as could be expected, both the priest and notary reached the castle; the former was conducted up stairs the moment he arrived, and had a long conference with the countess; after which the gentleman of the law was introduced, and also remained a considerable time in her chamber.

The evening was far advanced when they entered the drawing-room, where they found the baron, to whom they presented two sealed packets.

“ This, sir,” said the notary, handing one of the papers to the baron, “ is the Countess de Montmorency’s last will and testament, in which she appoints you the guardian of her son. The other packet contains a declaration of the highest importance, which it is her ladyship’s, your sister-in-law, wish should not be opened until after she has breathed her last sigh ; and should it be the pleasure of the Almighty to prolong her existence, she claims your word of honour to return it to her, without making any attempt to know its contents. I have the Countess de

Montmorency's orders to add, that if she recovers, she will herself acquaint you with them."

"Say to my sister-in-law, sir, that every wish of her's shall be held sacred," replied the baron, taking the two packets, which he immediately locked up in his writing-desk. The notary then left the room, and, after seeing the countess, departed from the castle; but the confessor, who was to remain there, seated himself near the baron, and seemed absorbed in a deep reverie.

"Reverend Father," said the baron, "the sadness I read in your eyes I presume is occasioned by the interest you take in my sister-in-law's situation. I am thankful she has created

so much sympathy in a soul like your's."

"I am admiring, sir, the wonder-working hand of Providence, who at its own good time tears off the veil, and shews iniquity in its natural hideous garb," said the venerable ecclesiastic; then seeming to repent of having uttered the last few words, he started, looked down, and as if recollecting himself, added: "Certainly the countess is entitled to commiseration."

The baron, astonished and vexed at the mystery that prevailed over all he had heard for the last few days, was lost in a labyrinth of conjectures: the word crime that had escaped from the countess was deeply engraven on his

mind, and he dreaded, yet wished for an explanation which could alone relieve him from his present awkward train of reflections.

The physician's prediction was but too soon verified: at midnight the baron was informed that the countess was at the point of death, and desired to speak to him.

As soon as he reached the bed-side, the dying countess said:—"I will not, sir....I cannot appear....in the presence of..my creator..who will shortly judge me..without having obtained..your pardon, for all..the unhappiness I have caused you."

"My dear sister," the worthy baron replied in tears, "in pity do not speak thus. Heaven is a witness that my

heart does not retain the slightest sensation of resentment for the trifling altercations we may have had, and I trust the Almighty will as readily forgive whatever faults or errors you——”

“Alas !” said the countess, interrupting him in a voice scarcely distinct ; “with what horror will you think of me when you know the crime....when you...learn the fatal secret which....ambition...a culpable..insatiable ambition has destroyed me—has made me trample on the most sacred duty in nature. In the name of that all merciful God whom I invoke, intercede with my son for me : plead for me, sir, with my child....let him not despise and hate the memory of his wretched mo-

ther. I should have had too much consolation and comfort for a sinner as I am, if I had been permitted to see him once more before I die : but no—I do not merit so much favour. He is not aware..of my situation..and he is too weak to endure so agonizing..an interview without danger to his life.” Here her voice became inarticulate ; but her lips moved rapidly, and she made one great effort, and said, grasping the baron’s hand : “ Tell him I bless him...and that I also bless——oh, my God ! my God ! it was for him..for his advantage, I became the guilty wretch——”

At this moment a frightful spasm prevented the unfortunate countess from finishing the sentence. Her head, which she had with much pain and difficulty

raised, dropped on her pillow: the physician, who had just come in, made a sign to the baronet, requesting him to withdraw; and he had hardly reached the door, when her for whose sorrows his tears still continued to flow yielded her last sigh.

The count remained for several days in ignorance of the loss he had sustained. His mother's dreadful situation had been from the beginning concealed from him: he thought a fit of the gout prevented her from leaving her room. When his strength was in some measure re-established, the baron, by the gentlest degrees, prepared him to hear the melancholy circumstance it had been his painful duty to announce; but, notwithstanding all his precaution, De Montmorency's grief was excessive.

He infinitely loved his mother, and most poignantly lamented not having personally received the last blessing of his beloved parent.

For many days he confined himself to his own room, where no one was permitted by their intrusion to interrupt his tears, the genuine tribute of filial affection.

The baron respected his nephew's grief, and patiently waited until his mind was in a state to allow of his being present at the opening of the will. At length a day was fixed on; the notary was sent for, and also the countess's confessor, who had witnessed her last wishes. They assembled in De Montmorency's chamber, and the will was opened; but scarcely had the

baron heard four lines, when a shriek of surprise escaped him, whilst his nephew, motionless, and unable to give utterance to his sensations, doubted whether he had rightly understood the words.

“ Before we proceed any farther,” said the notary, “ it will be necessary, gentlemen, to refer to the other packet, which I had the honour to present to the baron. Its contents will elucidate what the tenor of this instrument may have rendered not entirely perspicuous.”

The baron and De Montmorency were so greatly agitated by what they had just heard, that for some time they did not appear to comprehend the notary's meaning ; he, however, took

up the packet, and after bowing to the baron for his consent, broke the seals, and in an audible voice read the declaration it contained.

“Great God !” exclaimed De Montmorency, “is it possible my mother can have been so——”

“I never would have imagined it,” said the baron, interrupting him : “but, my dear boy, we must go—this instant go : we never can be too prompt to render justice, or relieve a sufferer, and such a victim too. Oh, Frederic! Frederic! who could have supposed thy mother capable of such depravity! but no more——the journey we are about to undertake is certainly a long one ; but I think, my dear boy, you are now strong enough to venture it.”

De Montmorency replied that he was most anxious to be on the road, and immediately gave orders for every necessary preparation to be made with the utmost possible speed.

The priest and lawyer, now the object of their mission was accomplished, took their leave, though not before they had expressed their admiration of the disinterestedness so evidently the characteristic of the young count.

In a quarter of an hour after the departure of these gentlemen, the baron and his nephew were seated in their travelling carriage. They for a long time conversed on the extraordinary circumstance that rendered their long journey indispensable at so severe a season of the year. Deep sighs fre-

quently evaporated from De Montmorency's bosom, and the good old baron was grieved to the heart to perceive his nephew's spirits so extremely depressed.

“My dear Frederic,” he at length said, “do not afflict yourself; you must not...for my sake, you must not give way to your unhappiness: most certainly your fortune is materially diminished by this singular discovery, but, thank God! mine is pretty considerable, especially since my wife's death. I have the power to dispose of my property as I please; and you know well enough what my inclination is: in short, it will be all your's. Therefore cheer up, my boy; it will kill your old uncle to see you mope; even as

things are your circumstances will be comfortable, and in the end, my dear fellow, you will be rich."

"Alas! dear sir, how little you know me, if you can suppose that the loss of a part of my fortune could cause me such grief as I at present am sinking under. No, my soul is oppressed by an irremediable sorrow. Julia! my beloved Julia! is never absent from my thoughts; she only can give a value to my existence—she has wound herself so closely around my heart, that I feel she must either be mine, or I am doomed to drag on a wretched, joyless life; which I hope the Almighty will soon terminate."

"We will find thy Julia," replied the baron; "be assured we shall find

her—take my word that the most diligent search shall be made for thy beloved: that worthless Madame de Seligny shall be forced to say where she has concealed her niece: if it be necessary, I will obtain the authority of majesty on this matter; Julia shall be your's, Frederic: for once trust your old uncle."

"Oh, my dear, dear sir," exclaimed De Montmorency, seizing the baron's hand, "if you restore Julia to me, you will give me a new existence."

How infinitely would the ardent Frederic have repented of his precipitation in leaving Touraine; with what eagerness he would have instantaneously returned there, could he have known that a letter from Julia, that

same Julia, the constant object of his thoughts and affections had reached the castle one half hour after his departure from it !

Events, which neither Julia or Isabella could foresee, had until now prevented the letter from reaching Touraine. Henry when he received it was in the centre of Germany ; he entrusted it to the care of a Prussian prisoner, who was sent into the interior of France, with a strict charge to convey it to the Count de Montmorency with the utmost speed possible. Unfortunately this man fell most dangerously ill on the road ; he was conveyed to an hospital, where after languishing six weeks he died ; and the letter to De Montmorency was found

in his pocket when an inventory of his personals was made to send to his family. It was then forwarded by the post, and arrived, as we have already mentioned, at the castle half an hour after De Montmorency had left it.

Julia had mournfully calculated the period necessary to obtain the so anxiously wished for answer : at the expiration of the time, her uneasiness became unbearable : days and weeks passed in the same unvarying misery : she was fast sinking into a state of despondency, when all her faculties were roused, all her energy called forth, and her affectionate attentions exclusively devoted to her unfortunate companion.

Every letter Isabella now received

from Henry her tears erased the characters of. Her heart trembled as she read his description of the fatal battles between the coalesced French and Austrian armies, and the Prussians.

“Dearest Isabella,” said the faithful Henry, “I told thee thy adored name should be my device; it has led me on to glory: already I have had the happiness to attract the notice of my superior officers, by conduct on which they have been pleased to bestow praise. Our general, the Prince de Soubise, did me the honour to assure me my promotion should be his peculiar care; and it is with a soldier’s pride I tell my Isabella, that in the field of battle I received that rank which will enable

me on my return home to claim my recompense—my wife.”

“Great and merciful God!” exclaimed Isabella, “avert all danger from that life no which depends my existence.” Julia comforted her friend, and by every soothing expression endeavoured to reanimate her courage; but the feeling Isabella heard her with vacuity of mind. Deep sighs evaporated from her bosom, and tears escaped from between her lovely eye-lashes.

Nearly two months passed in this monotonous misery. It was now the latter end of November, and for the last six weeks Isabella had not received any letter from Henry: her anxiety and agony became unbearable. These two young creatures, sequestered from

the world, heard nothing of the dreadful war which at that period ravaged the north of Europe: no news ever reached their retreat; and it was only through the medium of the curate of Font Romeu, whose visits to the castle had of late been very rare, they learned what was passing beyond their mountains.

One evening they were both seated near the fire with Bridget, when the curate was announced. Grief and consternation were depicted on the countenance of the respectable old man: he placed himself on a chair without uttering a word.

“What is the matter, Reverend Sir?” said Bridget; “I declare you quite terrify me: one would suppose

you had been reading the burial service over all your parishioners."

"Alas!" replied the good priest, "have you not then heard any thing of the dreadful battle of Rosbach—but perhaps it is better to remain in ignorance of the particulars, for our army has been annihilated by the Prussians."

Isabella gave a piercing scream, and became pale as death.

"Here," added the curate, taking a gazette from his pocket, "here is the list of all the officers who have been killed and...."

"Oh, give it—give it to me!" interrupted Isabella, tearing the gazette from his hands; then hastily running over the contents of the fatal sheet of

paper, she dropped on her knees, and raising her hands towards heaven, she exclaimed in a voice her tears rendered scarcely audible:—

“Oh, God! I thank thee; Henry, my beloved Henry is not....”

She could not finish the sentence, and fell senseless on the floor.

Julia flew to her friend, and, assisted by Bridget and the venerable old man, placed her on a chair.

“You see, Reverend Father,” said Bridget, angrily, “the effects of this girl’s mad attachment to a man whom she ought never to have raised her hopes to.”

“I see nothing but the effect of extreme sensibility and affection,” said the curate, with the mildness of real

goodness. “And I think the interest she takes in the fate of the companion of her infancy, and the son of her benefactress, not only natural, but also very amiable. Poor child ! destiny has rightly placed thee here, for many many wounds would have been inflicted on thy exquisitely fine sensations by an intercourse with what is called the great world.”

“Henry lives !——he lives !” exclaimed Isabella, who had just recovered from her fainting fit. “Oh, my Julia, participate in my joy...it overcomes me,” she added. “I cannot bear so much...such extreme happiness.” A plentiful shower of tears now relieved the oppression of her heart.

Bridget could not, although in the presence of the curate, whose mild and benevolent manners even she respected, any longer restrain her displeasure : she commanded Isabella to leave the room, which order she gladly obeyed, and was instantly followed by Julia.

“ Julia !” she again said to her friend, “ did you rightly understand ? Do you know my Henry lives ? That my prayers have ascended to heaven, and his life has been preserved. He will write to me——Oh, to-morrow I shall find a letter in the grotto ! my eyes will dwell with delight on the characters traced by his beloved hand. Dearest Julia, I am too happy.”

Isabella was half wild, she laughed, then cried—and at length yielded to

that affecting tumult which sudden happiness creates in a soul long accustomed to only painful sensations.

The next day Julia, as usual, undertook to amuse Bridget whilst Isabella went to the grotto to get her letter; but a melancholy she in vain tried to subdue, a presentiment of evil it was impossible to define, overpowered her spirits; she felt her heart depressed, and involuntary tears stole down her cheeks: she sat down at one of the windows, and followed with her eyes the movements of the heavy clouds that were slowly passing over each other on the summit of the mountains. Large flakes of snow now began to disperse themselves in the air. "Poor Isabella!" thought Julia. This idea

recalled to her mind the necessity of remaining with Bridget as long as possible, to prevent her observing her niece's absence from the castle. She immediately endeavoured to recollect some of the entertaining anecdotes she had heard in Touraine ; and tried, by relating them, to occupy the attention of the savage woman ; but all her efforts were unsuccessful. Bridget heard her with gloomy apathy, and complaining of a head-ach, retired to her chamber, intending to go to bed.

Julia, thankful for being thus relieved from the apprehension that Isabella's absence might be remarked by their Argus, remained in the room, and allowed her mind to wander back to scenes of former times. It was

now nearly dark. An impetuous wind had just arisen, which, ingulphed in the immense galleries of the castle, produced a plaintive and doleful sound, that filled the mind with awe and terror.

Julia felt an extraordinary and unaccountable sensation of uneasiness creep over her senses: she wondered why her friend did not return: at each moment she fancied she heard her footsteps, called her, and again attentively listened; but the creaking of the doors, and the shrill whistling of the wind, were the only answers to her voice. She at length resolved to go and meet Isabella, determined severely to chide her for thus forgetting herself in the grotto. The snow had ceased,

but night had already extended her sombre veil over the surrounding country, and some pale moon-beams, escaping through the clouds, spread a vague and uncertain light over the walks in the park.

Julia followed the traces of Isabella's steps imprinted on the snow, and on reaching the broken wall found the stones that had been removed to allow of her friend getting out of the park still scattered about on the ground.

"Great God!" she exclaimed in agony, "is it possible that Isabella is still in the grotto?"

Then hastily passing over the rubbish, she flew towards the spot where she expected to find her friend. She

had proceeded but a very few steps when dreadful groans reached her ears: horror-struck, she stood still, to listen with more attention to sounds that appalled her senses, and soon ascertained that they were the moans of a dog.

“Silvio,” said Julia, in a voice rendered nearly inarticulate by the excess of her terror.

The animal had heard her call, and ran towards her, his cries still encreasing. The faithful creature rolled himself on the ground at her feet, advanced a few steps, returned to her, then, as if he was anxious to encrease her speed, he took her gown between his teeth, and dragged her with him. Julia, distracted, and almost sinking

under her alarm, could hardly sustain herself.

“Isabella! dearest Isabella!” she repeated; but her voice was scarcely distinct, and Silvio’s distressing moans stifled the sounds her quivering lips allowed her to give utterance to. At length she reached the grotto, looked around, and giving a dreadful scream threw herself on the ground.

Poor Isabella, stretched on the snow, pale, cold, and inanimate, her hands strongly pressed against her heart, her hair and cloaths inundated with water, was the deplorable spectacle that presented itself to the eyes of the dismayed Julia.

“Oh, my friend!—my companion!—my dear Isabella!” said Julia, en-

deavouring to raise the sweet girl in her arms; but it was impossible to move the lovely and interesting burthen, which the earth seemed already to claim.

“ Oh, God!—Almighty God! what will become of her?” exclaimed Julia. “How shall I ever remove her from this place?”

She again leaned over the dear inanimate object, and endeavoured to ascertain if she still existed. She felt a slight throbbing under the hand she had laid on her friend’s heart, which gave her some little hope.

After drying Isabella’s face, she took off a long pelisse she herself wore, and was wrapping it round the frozen body, still motionless in the snow, when

she perceived a paper the unfortunate girl had placed on her bosom. She took it from thence, and unfolding the cover that enclosed it, was enabled by the light of the moon, to distinguish that the characters were written with blood, and at the bottom she perceived the signature of Henry.

Nearly overcome by surprise and horror, she supported herself against a tree for a few instants, then recollecting the necessity for the exertion of all her presence of mind and spirits, she resolved to read the fatal letter she held in her trembling hands.

“ Dear and most beloved friend, sole charm of my existence! Oh! thou whom I adore, and for whom alone I desired to obtain glory and

fortune, Heaven will not give us to each other. I am dying! When my Isabella reads these last mournful lines the hand that traced them will be cold—her lover, her husband will be no more! I have attempted too much: I wished for distinction and honours, because they only could lead me to happiness.

“Mortally wounded, and stretched on the field of battle, I write with my blood this last farewell. Oh! Almighty God! bless and comfort my Isabella!.... Receive, my love, the last farewell of the unfortunate Henry!”

“She will die too!” exclaimed Julia, melting into tears. “She will die, and I shall lose my friend, my sweet companion: alas! perhaps even

now she no longer exists !” She once again tried to raise Isabella in her arms, but her strength was insufficient, and in despair she threw herself on the ground at the side of her unfortunate friend.

The night had become frightfully dark, and a cold sleeting rain began to fall. Julia determined to leave Isabella and obtain assistance from the castle. She had scarcely got out of the grotto with this intention, when a distant voice, and the sound of horses’ feet, moving with the utmost speed, struck her ear. Under any other circumstances the greatest alarm would have pervaded her spirits, but all her thoughts centering on Isabella, the idea of any human being in such a

lonely and unfrequented place, who would assist her to remove her unfortunate friend, made her heart beat with violence.

“ Help !” she exclaimed ; “ help ! whoever you are, in pity, for the sake of humanity, do stop and assist me !”

Echos repeated the last words, and all was again frightfully silent. She stopped and attentively listened. No sound but that occasioned by the wind and rain could be heard. She was beginning to believe herself the sport of a treacherous illusion, when she again heard the same noise nearer to her : in a few instants it seemed close to her, and stretching out her hand, she felt a horse’s head, and screamed with terror.

“Is it you, Miss Isabella?” said a man in a low voice.

“Oh, no! no!” replied Julia; “but if you know her, if you take the slightest interest in her life, instantly accompany me, and heaven grant we may not be too late.”

“Great God!” exclaimed the stranger, “is it possible! I but too truly anticipated this calamity! My father’s mistaken zeal has caused this most fatal effect.”

“Dear, dear Ximeo.” said Julia, who now discovered with whom she was conversing, “do not lose a moment—let us fly to assist my poor friend.”

They instantly advanced towards the grotto, where they found the unfortu-

nate girl still inanimate. Ximeo took her in his arms, placed her before him on the horse, and Julia, holding the bridle, they together reached the castle.

On their way Ximeo had informed Julia that he was absent from home when the packet of letters arrived at the cottage.

“The outward cover,” he added, “was addressed to my father, who thinking to delight Miss Isabella, hastened with the letter it contained for her to the grotto, never dreaming of the necessity of looking at the one also enclosed to him, intended for me. When I returned and read the contents of the fatal letter I nearly lost my senses. Imagine to yourself, madam,

my sensations on learning the dreadful news, communicated to me by one of Mr. Henry's brother officers, to whom he had entrusted the care of fulfilling his last wishes. He particularly begs me to use every delicate precaution in preparing Miss Isabella's mind, by the gentlest degrees, for the dreadful shock that she has to sustain, and with much feeling and humanity entreats me not to give her Colonel de Florange's letter until she is in a situation to receive it without danger. My father, on hearing these melancholy particulars, aware of his great imprudence in taking the letter to the grotto, fainted away; and my poor mother's agony is shocking to witness: she was his nurse, young lady—Mr. Henry and

myself were nourished from the same source: but I must proceed," he added, dashing off the large tear-drops of real regard that rolled down his cheeks. "It became necessary to remedy the evil as quickly as possible, unfortunately I had returned so late, that I was almost sure Miss Isabella had already visited the grotto: however, I did not lose a moment, but mounting my horse, I galloped towards this place, and I am truly glad I did so, since my presence has relieved you madam, from the very distressing predicament in which you was placed."

Julia, could only answer Ximeo's melancholy recital with her tears. At length the melancholy party reached one of the park gates near the garden-

er's house. Julia tried to pull the bell, but her frozen fingers had not the power to produce an audible sound, and Ximeo was several times obliged to exert his voice, which at length induced the man to open the door.

Isabella, still insensible, was carried up to the castle, and immediately put to bed. Bridget believing her really lifeless, seemed to feel the greatest alarm.

“ You are a witness, Julia,” she said, “ that I did not cause this.”

Julia did not hear her; entirely occupied by her friend's illness, she could not attend to Bridget, whose unfeeling manners disgusted her. She herself administered every necessary remedy. During Ximeo's absence, who was

gone in search of a physician, she constantly held her friend in her arms, rubbing her temples and hands with volatile spirits, whilst her burning tears fell on the face of the unconscious Isabella.

Nearly three hours passed without her showing the slightest symptom of life. The physician on his arrival opened a vein, and Julia with inexpressible joy perceived, by the flowing of her blood, that her friend still existed. She watched her every motion, and could not withdraw her looks from the lovely countenance still covered by the shades of death: at length Isabella opened her eyes, and breathed a deep sigh.

“Henry!” she murmured in a

mournful voice ; her head dropped on Julia's shoulder, and she seemed sinking into a convulsive slumber.

The rest of the night passed in the same manner. Bridget, relieved from the apprehension of her being quite dead, retired to rest. The physician, after prescribing for the invalid, left the castle : Ximeneo returned to his disconsolate parents, and Julia alone remained to watch over her friend.

At five o'clock in the morning Isabella awoke ; she stared wildly around her, and raising herself up in her bed, uttered some words, but in so very low a tone that Julia could not comprehend them.

“ My dear friend,” she said approaching her, “ speak to me, tell me, do you still suffer ?”

“Hush,” said Isabella, putting her hand on Julia’s arm; “he is there, I see him, but pray take care that Bridget does not observe him.”

“Who?” said Julia, infinitely alarmed at the appearance of mental derangement in her friend’s countenance—“No one but myself is now near you:—Do you not know me do you not know your own Julia?”

“Julia!” said Isabella, as if trying to regulate her confused ideas: “you are Julia? Listen to me,” she added in a whisper; “I have seen him; I have seen Henry, he expected me in the grotto, and I went to him; I touched his hand, but it was cold, so very cold it chilled my heart; feel, it will never be warm again till Henry——”

“ Great God ! ” exclaimed Julia, take pity on my unfortunate friend ! ” then hastily leaving the room, she ran to Bridget’s apartment, and most earnestly entreated her to again send the physician.

“ It will be quite useless,” replied Bridget, yawning, “ for the doctor told me yesterday, that if Isabella was even to recover her health, which he has no hope of, she would certainly lose her mind, and I am not at all surprised for I always foresaw that some day or other this little girl would become insane.”

“ Monster,” exclaimed Julia, almost overcome by her indignation, “ can you be a woman and speak with that barbarous indifference of a

calamity which excites commiseration even in the most hardened and depraved bosom? Can you see the lovely creature you have reared from her infancy die the victim of sensibility, and still remain unmoved? Yes you can, for you are destitute of those valuable attributes of your sex, gentleness and humanity.'

On finishing these words she left the room and went in search of a servant, whom she instantly dispatched, on horseback, with strict orders not to return without the physician.

END OF VOL. II.

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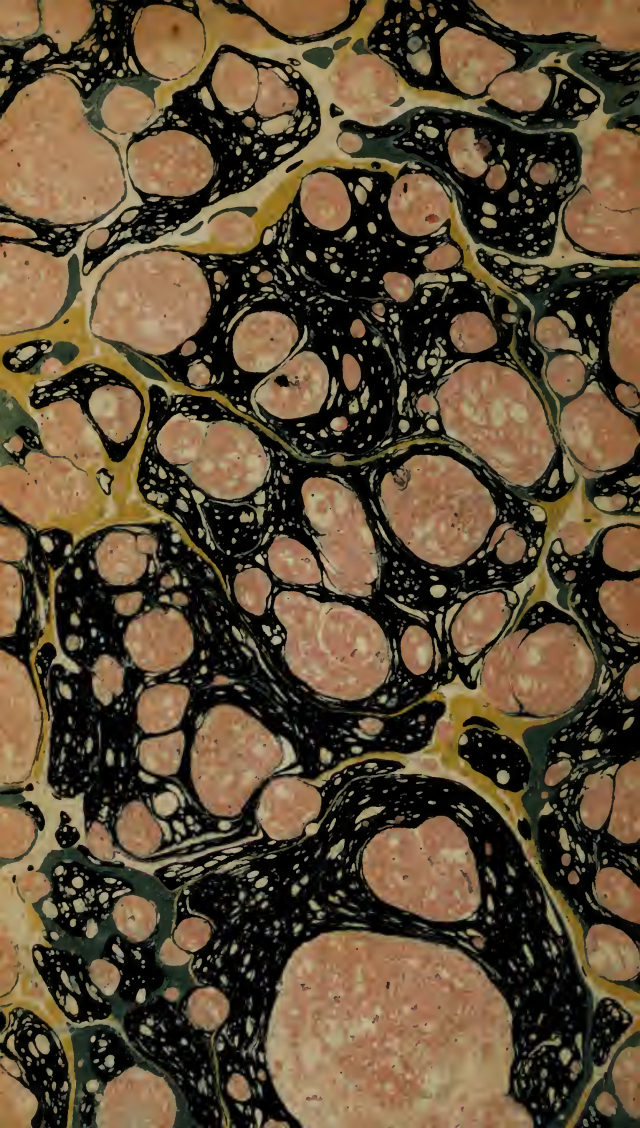
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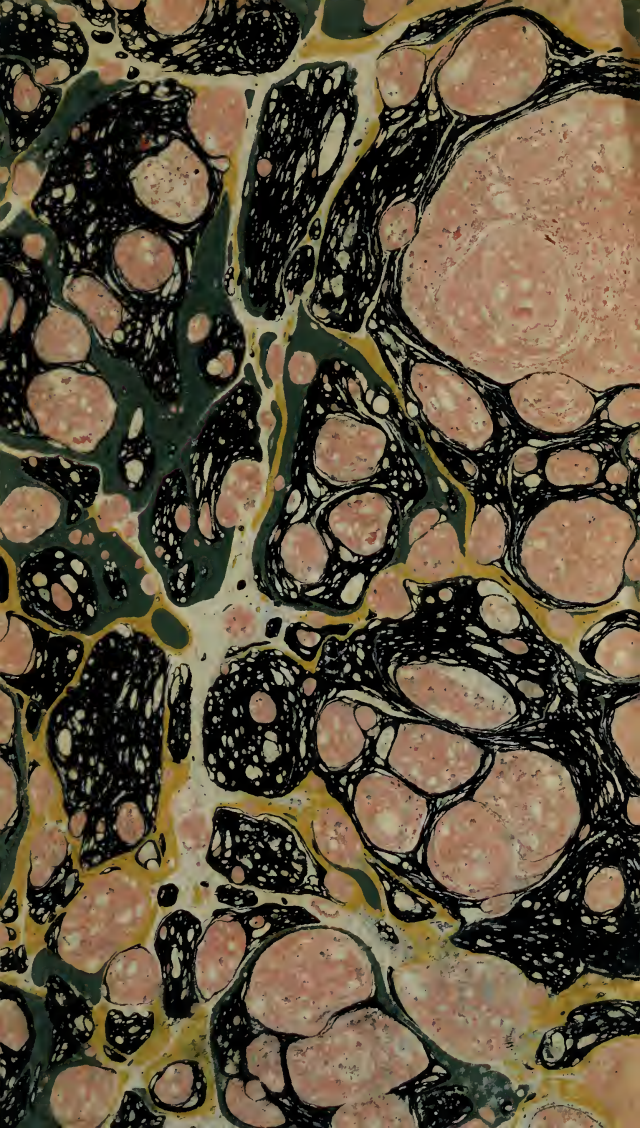
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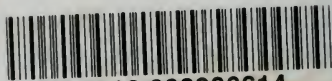




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